

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO. STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21
NO. W.S. 1680

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1680.

Witness

Thomas J. Golden,
Gurrane,
Donoughmore,
Co. Cork.

Identity.

O/C, Donoughmore Battn., Cork 1 Brigade, I.R.A.

Subject.

Courtbrack Coy., Donoughmore Battalion,
Cork 1 Bgde., I.R.A., 1914 - 1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil.

File No S. 270.

Form B.S.M. 2

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21

NO. W.S. 1680

STATEMENT OF THOMAS J. GOLDEN,
Gurrane, Donoughmore, County Cork.

In December, 1913, a Company of Volunteers was started in the Courtbrack Chapel area. That area covered portions of the parishes of Blarney, Donoughmore and Inniscarra. The majority of the members of the Company and those in control of it were Redmondite supporters and those of us in the area, who were not Irish Party followers, did not join at first, though some efforts were made to induce us to come in. About May, 1914, a number of us joined the Company in response to an appeal for recruits.

On the same day that we joined there was an election of officers. Father Shinnick was elected President, P.M. Walsh, Chairman, and Denis Downey, Secretary. I was elected Assistant Secretary. P.M. Walsh was an ex-Australian policeman who knew a little drill. There were no other officers. There were about sixty men in the Company at the time and they had some Garabaldi rifles but no ammunition for them. Father Shinnick came over to us after 1916.

The split in the Company took place in September, 1914. Of those present that day thirty voted for Redmond's control, and nine against. There is a report of the speeches made at the meeting in the "Cork Examiner". The nine of us withdrew and the Redmondites carried on for some time but had faded out before Easter, 1916, as an effective organisation.

We started a Company of the Irish Volunteers in November, 1914, and our strength increased steadily. We started with about twelve men; in December we had about twenty-five, and in December, 1915, we had forty.

Two parades a week were held regularly from the start up to Easter, 1916, and in addition there were route marches and exercises on Sundays. The week-night parades were usually held at Courtbrack. The average attendance at these in 1915 was thirty. In addition to their training value, the Sunday marches had, as an objective, recruiting for the Volunteers in the surrounding districts. Marches took place to Donoughmore - four miles, Mournay Abbey - ten miles, Mallow - fourteen miles, Blarney - five miles and Waterloo - five miles. Sometimes we combined with the Cork City Companies in Sunday exercises, such as the manoeuvres at Waterloo in the summer of 1915; J.J. O'Connell of Dublin took charge of the Courtbrack Company that day, and Sean O'Sullivan was in charge of the Cork City men. We had about twelve men in a rifle competition at Carrigtwohill in 1915. We had our own .22, but got knocked out in the competition by not being allowed to fire it. We had to fire a converted Garabaldi.

Courtbrack Company was the first to be formed in this area, and the Brigade O/C. - Tomás MacCurtain - used the Company extensively in organising the neighbouring areas. A cycle section from the Company and a cycle section from Cork City went with him to Mallow in April, 1915. There was some dispute in the Mallow Company at the time. A County Board, consisting of the Cork Committee and representatives of the County Units, existed up to the end of 1915, but when the Battalions were formed about that time the normal military organisation replaced it.

Courtbrack Company took part in the St. Patrick's Day and Manchester Martyrs' parades in Cork in 1915, and in the St. Patrick's Day Parade in 1916. The 1915 St. Patrick's Day Parade brought us some recruits. Four or five men from the Company took part in the

O'Donovan Rossa funeral in Dublin, fully armed. Men from the Company also took part in the parade in Limerick on Whit Sunday, 1915.

Church door collections were held throughout the area for the Arms Fund and the men paid 3d. per man per week into a Company Fund for the purchase of equipment. The equipment consisted of haversacks, belts, bandoliers, waterbottles, puttees and hats. This Company had Australian type green hats turned up at one side, though peaked caps were more usual in other Companies. There about three full uniforms in the Company of which I had one. By Easter, 1916, every man in the Company was fully equipped.

In July, 1915, we got twelve Mauser rifles and 200 rounds of ammunition for them from the Brigade. These were purchased from Company Funds.

At Easter, 1916, we had the following arms in the Company :-

Twelve Mauser rifles with bayonets and 200 rounds; one .22 rifle and a fair supply of ammunition; twelve shotguns with a plentiful supply of ordinary cartridges. None had been slug loaded; five .22 revolvers with a good supply of ammunition; one .32 revolver and six rounds; twenty pikes (eight finished) made locally with 9 ft. handles.

There was no change of officers from the formation of the Company up to Easter, 1916. The officers were :- Captain Thomas J. Golden: Instructor James Golden, an ex-British Army man. There were no other officers.

The orders for the exercises on Easter Sunday, 1916, had been issued about a fortnight beforehand. The Brigade O/C. - Tomás MacCurtain - sent for me and I saw him at the Hall in Sheares Street, Cork, on Good Friday. He told me that a landing of arms was expected on the Kerry coast. My Company was to parade at Bweeing Cross, six miles away, on Easter Sunday with all arms and equipment

and rations for two days. I am not sure now of what the time fixed for the parade was, but it was in the evening - it may have been 4 o'clock. He said the men would be out for the night and should bring blankets or heavy coats. He gave no definite orders not to tell anyone that this was anything more than an ordinary two-day exercise. Any announcement that was to be made he would make himself when he arrived at Bweeing. If he did not come, some member of his staff would come. Bweeing was only a stage on our journey but we were to wait there for further orders. He did not say anything about a Rising and I understood the purpose of the mobilisation to be the getting of arms. He said that we may have to defend the rifles with our lives. Early in 1916 I had been sworn in as a member of the I.R.B. by Pa Twomey, Kilmona, but I had no information, other than that given me that day by MacCurtain, as to what action was proposed to be taken on Easter Sunday. I was the only I.R.B. man in the Company.

Later that night, Good Friday, the orders for Sunday were confirmed by the Battalion O/C., Pa Twomey, but the time was changed to 2 o'clock at Bweeing Cross.

The whole Company was mobilised in accordance with the orders received for Easter Sunday, and all paraded with the exception of a few who were unable to turn out. The following members of the Company paraded (38) :-

Thomas J. Golden (Captain,	Gurrane, Donoughmore.
Batt. Golden,	" "
Patrick O'Connell,	" "
John O'Connell,	" "
Michael Healy,	" "
Daniel Healy,	" "
William Buckley,	" "
Patrick O'Callaghan,	" "
David O'Callaghan,	" (on duty as Brigade driver)
Michael O'Connell,	" Despatch Rider)
Jeremiah Buckley,	Pluckanes, "

Owen McCarthy,	Firmount, Donoughmore.
Denis McCarthy,	" "
Jeremiah McCarthy,	" "
Michael Murray,	Courtbrack, Blarney.
Denis Downey,	" "
William Downey	" "
Jeremiah Downey,	" "
Denis Kelleher,	" "
James Golden,	Garryadeen, Grenagh.
Michael Sullivan,	Courtbrack, Blarney.
Batt. D. Kelleher,	" "
Con Kelleher,	" "
Jeremiah Kelleher,	" "
Patrick O'Keefe,	" "
William Lucy,	32, Dublin St., Blackpool, Cork.
Patrick Madden,	Dawstown, Blarney.
Michael Ward,	Loughnane, "
Maurice Walsh,	" "
John Scott,	" "
Timothy Forde,	" "
Patrick Forde,	" "
John Sexton,	" "
John O'Sullivan,	Tower, St. Anne's Hill.
Richard O'Sullivan,	" " " "
John Murphy,	" " " "
Patrick Buckley,	Vicarstown.
John Daly,	Victoria Cross, Cork.

In addition to these the following men from Waterloo Company paraded with us :-

John Reilly, Garrycloyne.
 Denis Reilly, "
 Denis Kiely, Ballygibbon,
 Eugene Kiely, "
 Tom Murphy, Ballinareha,
 Jack McAuliffe, Blarney,
 John Horgan, Shamrock Terrace, Blarney.
 Andrew O'Keefe, " " "

We paraded at Gurrane and marched to Ahadillane, where we met the Kilmona, Whitechurch, Waterloo and Mourne Abbey Companies. The whole party marched to Bweeing Cross. The Donoughmore Company marched directly to Bweeing Cross. Shortly after our arrival Michael Lynch came there on a motor cycle. I do not know if he had any particular business there; he did not bring any message that I know of. The Mallow Company also arrived at Bweeing Cross. Two detectives from Mallow and an R.I.C. man from

Dromahane were there - they were there before we arrived and it looked as if they knew the parade was to be held there.

A guard from Courtbrack Company was put on the rifles and other arms and the men were given a fall-out for refreshments. We expected the early arrival of the Brigade O/C. The day was cold and when he did not arrive a consultation was held amongst the officers and it was decided to occupy the men with some exercises. An exercise was carried out on a mountain about half a mile from Bweeing Cross. This had concluded and we were back at the Cross and formed-up again before Tomás MacCurtain arrived. It may have been 5 o'clock when he came. There was no one with him except the driver of the car, David O'Callaghan, and one of the Hales of Ballinadee.

Tomás MacCurtain appeared to be in a great hurry. He addressed the whole parade and said that the exercises were cancelled. The men were to return quietly to their homes and keep their arms safely. They may soon be wanted again, he said, and may be called upon in the near future. We were to remain alert and 'stand to arms' until further orders. He left before we did and went in the direction of Cork. I do not know what his subsequent movements were that day.

We marched back to our own areas. The evening got very wet and everybody was soaked. The order to 'stand to arms' was issued to the Company on Sunday night and we 'stood to' during the week. We were very disappointed, but were hoping that we may be called out again. We did not hear of the loss of the arms ship for three or four days afterwards.

David O'Callaghan brought an order from the Brigade on Tuesday night, 25th April, to 'dump arms'. All arms and ammunition

were carefully dumped and none was captured in the subsequent raids.

The following houses were raided by military and R.I.C. :-

Thomas J. Golden's, Gurrane, Donoughmore; Michael Murray's, Courtbrack, Blarney; Owen and Denis McCarthy's, Firmount, Donoughmore.

The R.I.C. left orders at these houses that the arms were to be handed into them, but no weapon was surrendered in Courtbrack Company area. The house of James Golden, Garryadean, Grenagh, was raided during his absence, and windows broken to effect an entrance. He lived alone.

There was no Fianna organisation in the Company area up to Easter, 1916.

About October, 1917, an order was received from Brigade Headquarter directing all Companies to have a new election of officers. At a full meeting of Courtbrack Company I was again unanimously elected O/C. The strength of the Company was now about sixty men. A few weeks later a meeting of the Company Captains in the Battalion (Donoughmore) was held on the roadside near Ballyglass School. The Companies represented at this meeting were :- Courtbrack, Grenagh, Ahadillane, Mourne Abbey, Whitechurch, Donoughmore and Rylane. The Battalion officers elected at this meeting were :-

O/C.	Patrick P. Twomey,
Vice O/C.	Thomas J. Golden (Witness), Courtbrack,
Adjutant	Denis McCarthy, Courtbrack,
Quartermaster	James Barrett, Donoughmore.

At a Sinn Féin Árd Fheis held later that year in Dublin at which "Pa" Twomey (O/C.) and I were present, we represented the Battalion at a convention of Volunteers held at Croke Park, Dublin, after midnight. Towards the end of the year 1917, a review of some

battalions of the Cork I.R.A. was held at Parnell Place, Cork, by Eamonn de Valera. The strength of our battalion (Donoughmore) on this occasion was about 600 men.

During the year 1917 parades at which our battalion was represented were held at many centres, including Cork City (26th June on release of prisoners) and Berrings on 15th August. Arms and equipment were carried on the latter occasion. As a result the R.I.C. carried out a number of raids for arms but found none. However, they arrested two members of Courtbrack Company (Denis Murray and Michael O'Sullivan). Both were removed to Mountjoy Gaol where they underwent a ten days' hungerstrike. They were subjected to forcible feeding and were later removed to Dundalk. They were released in November 1917.

On their release the Battalion O/C (Patrick P. Twomey) and I ordered a battalion parade at Courtbrack Company Headquarters. The following Companies were represented - Courtbrack (Lieutenant D. Kelleher), Donoughmore (Captain Jack Manning), Berrings (Captain Richard O'Mahoney), Rylane (Captain Dan Farrell), Grenagh and Blarney. After this parade the Courtbrack Company held a meeting at which Denis Murray was unanimously elected Captain to replace me.

Early in 1918 a branch of Cumann na mBan was formed at Courtbrack. My two sisters became members. This branch was a great asset to the local Company of the Irish Volunteers - raising funds through dances and such like promotions. During the Conscription period they worked night and day in making and supplying each member of the Company with a First Aid outfit. While the members of Cumann na mBan were engaged on these activities the Volunteers of all units were engaged in the manufacture of weapons of various kinds, canister bombs, slugs for reloading cartridges and home-made

gunpowder. All available cartridges were re-charged and loaded with heavy slugs to replace ordinary shot.

Military instructions in field drill, skirmishing, signalling, scouting, dispatch riding, attack and defence positions etc. were imparted to the various units by the O/C. (Patrick P. Twomey) and myself assisted by the Company Officers. The Battalion Council arranged for units to meet every Sunday and on odd week-nights at central points for the purpose of putting such drill into practical operation. The men present on these occasions were usually divided into two sections - the Battalion O/C (Patrick P. Twomey) taking charge of one section while I took part of the other.

The British were at this time threatening to apply Conscription to Ireland. Commandant Twomey and I made all due preparations to meet this crisis with force of arms. For convenience it was decided to divide the Battalion (Donoughmore). The O/C. ("Pa" Twomey) took charge of Courtbrack, Blarney and Grenagh Companies and I, as Vice O/C., had control of Donoughmore, Rylane and Berrings (later Inniscarra). Commandant Twomey's headquarters were at Grenagh and mine at Derry House, Donoughmore. The Battalion Council met bi-weekly to check reports. These meetings were generally held at Finan's Forge, Firmount. This arrangement worked very satisfactorily. A fund known as "the Anti-Conscription Fund" was at this time being taken up all over Ireland. A very successful collection for this fund was taken up in our area.

About this time I assisted at a cattle drive, ordered by the Brigade Staff, on the farm of Mr. B. Daunt, Newcastle, Blarney. Over forty head of cattle were removed from the farm by a party of twenty-eight men under my command and were handed over to the Donoughmore Company.

In the spring of 1918 all supporters of Sinn Féin and the I.R.A. concerned were asked by Headquarters not to give a return of potato stocks in their possession to the British as requested by them. As a farmer and a responsible Battalion officer I refused to give this return with the result that I was summoned before an enemy Court. A number of other farmers in the area were also summoned for the same offence. I did not attend the Court and in my absence I was fined £1. Another similar return was asked for in February 1918, but I again refused to furnish it. I was summoned a second time.

On this occasion, however, I went to the Court on the day fixed for the hearing of my case. I was accompanied by about twenty-five I.R.A. men drawn from Courtbrack and Donoughmore Companies. We stormed into the Court, refused to remove our hats and defied the magistrates, District Inspector and police. The following report of the proceedings appeared in the "Cork Examiner" of February 21st, 1918 :-

"Patrick Looney and Thomas J. Golden were summoned by Mr. Beirne, D.I., for failure to furnish a return of potatoes for the month of December 1917. When called they came forward wearing headgear.

Mr. O'Hara, R.M. (Resident Magistrate) - 'Let those men remove their hats'.

Mr. Golden replied that he was answering for the lot when he said that they would not remove their hats as they were soldiers of the Irish Republic and did not respect the Court. Golden said he had given a return to the Sinn Féin Food Committee and considered that was sufficient. A fine of 10/- and costs was imposed. The defendants intimated that they would not pay the fines."

I claim to be the first I.R.A. man who openly defied an enemy Court. On the third and final term I again refused to furnish the return. I was again summoned and fined. Realising that the British military might be present on this occasion I advised the Volunteers to keep away from the Court on this occasion.

I was now fined £5. As the fines were not paid an order for my arrest was issued. I was now compelled to go 'on the run' and during the succeeding twelve months several day and night raids were made on my home. I remained in the area all the time and was in constant touch with the Companies and my O/C. I was now free to move around the area and when a dispute arose in the Berrings Company I was deputed by the Brigade O/C (Tomás McCurtain) and the Brigade Adjutant (Pat Higgins) to try to fix things up. They had already visited the area and had failed to settle the dispute.

I ordered the Company to be at their meeting place at 8 p.m. on a certain night. When I arrived there I found a very large number of men assembled - young and old - at an old unoccupied house. I found that the trouble was caused by the older people - they were all members of the local Sinn Féin club. In a short time I sized up the situation and came to a decision which worked admirably. I ordered all the young men out on to the roadway to line up and get ready for a march. I then appealed to the older men to strengthen their Sinn Féin branch, and to raise funds to help the young men to fight Conscription.

I then took the Company of young men on a route march of a few miles, addressed them on the seriousness of the times, and told them of the other Companies in the battalion who were training and arming themselves to fight Conscription. Why not they do the same and leave the older people to run the Sinn Féin club. From this on this Company (Berrings) was one of the best Companies in the battalion.

It was past midnight when I left the Company on this occasion and I had to cycle five miles to my "digs". As I was passing close

to my home I called to get a glass of milk. My sister would not allow me into the house; but she handed me out the glass of milk. It was now about 1.30 a.m. and having partaken of the milk I moved on. When I had gone about half a mile along the road I felt very tired so I took my bike inside the roadside fence and lay down. I was soon fast asleep. While I slept a lorry of police raided my home at 2 a.m. having passed by the spot where I was sleeping. Had my sister allowed me to enter the home when I called I would more than likely have been captured by the raiders.

Commandant Twomey (Battalion O/C.) resigned owing to ill health in October, 1918. A meeting of the Brigade Council was called at which Brigadier Tomás MacCurtain presided. At this meeting I was appointed Battalion O/C, and Richard O'Mahoney (O/C., Berrings Company) was appointed Battalion Vice O/C. The officers of Donoughmore Battalion at this time were :-

O/C.	Thomas J. Golden, Witness,
Vice O/C.	Richard O'Mahoney,
Adjutant	Denis McCarthy,
Quartermaster	Jim Barrett.

A General Election was held in December 1918. I got instructions from the Brigade O/C. (Tomás MacCurtain) to take my Battalion to Cork City to keep order at the various polling booths as tension was running very high at the time and opinions were much divided. I had my headquarters at a large building yard and lofts in Drinan Street, the property of W. L. Kelleher, Inniscarra. In addition to my own Battalion (Donoughmore) I was placed in charge of several other units. There were many calls for our assistance especially during the evening and up to the closing of the booths. Several scraps took place, but there were no serious injuries.

Training went on throughout 1919 and activities in the Battalion (Donoughmore) never ceased. A careful watch was kept

on the movements of the R.I.C. and two members of the force were fired on at Berrings in September of that year. One of the R.I.C. party was wounded. As a result of this operation I was raided for but was not "at home". Owen McCarthy - a member of the Courtbrack Company - was arrested and detained for about six weeks.

I think it was about August, 1919 that I received word that a cycle patrol of military and R.I.C. had passed through the area. I immediately mobilised a party of fifteen men - drawn mainly from Courtbrack Company - and took up an ambush position at Daly's Rocks, Foxe's Bridge, on the road to Blarney to intercept them on the return journey. When we had been in position about an hour a despatch rider arrived to inform us that the enemy patrol had returned by another route. We moved across country in an effort to engage the patrol; but failed to make contact with the enemy. The men on duty on this occasion were :- Thomas J. Golden (Battalion O/C) - witness, Batt Golden, John Daly, John O'Connell and Michael O'Connell - all from Gurrane, Donoughmore; Denis Murray, Michael Murray, James Murray, Michael O'Sullivan, William Downey - all from Courtbrack, Blarney; William Gillman and Jeremiah Hegarty from Kilclough, St. Ann's Hill; Michael Dinan, Tower, St. Ann's Hill, William Lucey, 32 Dublin Street, Blackpool, and Denis McCarthy, Pluckanes, Donoughmore.

On 6th December, 1919, I planned an attack on Rathduff (Grenagh) R.I.C. barracks. Nine men from Courtbrack Company were in position for the attack, but through some misunderstanding the men from another Company failed to turn out: In the circumstances the attack was called off.

At this period I took a course of instruction on despatch writing (code system), guerilla warfare and advanced training.

The lectures were given by the Brigade O/C. (Tomás MacCurtain) who visited the area for this purpose. I also took part in the organisation of Gaelic League classes, Aeríochtanna, feiseanna and in the work of all National organisations during this year.

Plans for an attack on Donoughmore R.I.C. barracks were prepared by me and submitted to the Brigade O/C. (Tomás MacCurtain) at the beginning of 1920. The plans were drawn up with the co-operation of Jack Manning (O/C., Donoughmore Company) and Jim Barrett (Battalion Adjutant). As it was decided to carry out a general attack on enemy posts in the Brigade area at a later stage no action was taken regarding the plans for Donoughmore.

About this time an appeal through "Nationality" (a weekly journal edited by Arthur Griffith) was made to all Irishmen holding the commission of "Justice of the Peace" - "J.P." for short - to resign. As there were a number of hostile J.Ps. in this battalion area - some being recently appointed - I, as Battalion O/C., issued an order to my Company O/Cs. to call on all such persons in the district to tender their resignations within fourteen days. All resigned within the specified time with one exception. This gentleman had a nephew who was a member of the I.R.A. in Cork City, and through him influence was brought to bear on the Brigade O/C. (Tomás MacCurtain) who, shortly before he was murdered, held an inquiry into the matter and as a result congratulated me on my action. I might add that a few men from my Battalion (Donoughmore) were summoned before enemy Courts for wearing Tricoloured badges and were sentenced to terms of imprisonment by these J.Ps.

The murder of Brigadier Tomás MacCurtain on 20th March caused a sensation, not alone in his native County where he was admired and respected, but throughout the entire world wherever an Irishman

was to be found. I was present at a specially convened meeting of the Brigade Council when arrangements were made for the funeral. My battalion (Donoughmore) - the 6th of Cork I. Brigade - marched at full strength at the funeral.

Following the murder of our Brigadier, Terence MacSwiney was automatically appointed Brigade O/C. One of his first orders was that Battalion O/Cs. should study all local R.I.C. barracks for the purpose of mapping the best means of attacking and, where possible, capturing all arms etc. found therein. I again presented my plans for the attacks on Donoughmore and Rathduff barracks which did not materialise as the abovementioned Justice of the Peace worked up his influence with Brigade Commandant MacSwiney, who took a different view from his predecessor and ordered a courtmartial of my action. He gave as his reason that the order "to resign commissions did not come from I.R.A. Headquarters."

The Courtmartial was held at Courtbrack and was presided over by the Brigade Adjutant - Florence O'Donoghue. On the advice of my old Company officers I did not attend. Captain Denis Murray, Courtbrack Company, and the members of his Company put all the facts before the Court, but to no avail. The Presiding Officer asked for my resignation which I duly tendered later - in March or April, 1920. I prevailed on Captain Murray and the members of his Company (who had threatened to withdraw from the I.R.A. organisation as a protest) to continue with their normal activities while I rejoined the Company as a Volunteer and continued to serve in this capacity up to the Truce. Richard O'Mahoney now became O/C., Donoughmore Battalion.

Several raids by Black and Tans and Auxiliaries were carried out at this time. My home was visited on a number of occasions

and wholesale destruction took place - furniture, beds and bedclothes were damaged and jewellery was stolen.

Local Government Elections were held throughout Ireland in June 1920. Sinn Féin candidates were returned by overwhelming majorities nearly everywhere. The newly elected Cork Rural District Council, at its first meeting, co-opted me as a member, and later appointed me a Director of the Cork, Muskerry and Donoughmore Railway.

In August, 1920 I was mobilised and assisted Denis Murray (O/C., Courtbrack) in preparing an ambush at Turpin's Rocks on the Shournagh road which was patrolled nightly by military in tenders. The position was occupied for twelve nights without result. During one of these nights I attended a meeting of Sinn Féin at the Bandroom, Matehy. While the meeting was in progress, word reached us that the enemy lorries were approaching. We cleared out and ten minutes later the room was raided. This was a change of route, by-passing our ambush party at Turpin's Rocks.

When the Republican Courts were set up in the summer of 1920 I sat as member of the local District Court at Grenagh with Patrick P. Twomey, Grenagh, and Páud O'Donoghue, Coachford.

Towards the end of 1920 (December) I was a member of an ambush party in position at Turpin's Rocks for about a week. Although we remained in position from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. each night over this period there was no appearance by the expected enemy patrol. On another occasion about this period I lay in ambush at Courtbrack Cross for two or three evenings, but the job was called off on the intervention of the local Catholic Curate.

My position at this time was becoming intolerable as repeated raids by enemy forces were being made on my home which was occupied

by two younger sisters who were unprotected. I had to be continually on the move in order to avoid arrest. However, I was always available for any duty which I might be called on to perform. Before the end of 1920 I was assisted by Captain Denis Murray (Courtbrack) and ex-Battalion O/C. (Patrick P. Twomey) to form an active section of the I.R.A. at Kilmona.

Early in January, 1921, several men, including the ex-Battalion O/C. (Patrick P. Twomey), were arrested in Grenagh area. At this time I was one of five men engaged under Denis Murray (O/C., Courtbrack) in raiding the mails for suspected treasonable documents. None was, however, found, but all letters were censored and re-posted for delivery.

Owing to an injury to my foot, which later necessitated an operation after the Truce, I was compelled to abandon activities for a couple of months at this stage. However, I was in constant touch with my O/C. (Denis Murray) who often sought my advice on military matters. When I resumed duty towards the end of March, 1921, I took part in the making of a "dug-out" in a fort at Gurrane and at Ballycraheen in Courtbrack area. I was also mobilised for an ambush of a military convoy at Ballyshonin, but as the enemy force was too strong the attack was called off.

Enemy forces were now raiding in the area repeatedly day and night. In the three months prior to the Truce nineteen such raids were made on my home resulting in irreparable damage to household effects, seed-oats, potatoes etc. The raiders threatened to burn the dwelling house and fired shots over my sisters' heads. They (my sisters) were warned that if I did not give myself up within a week the shots would take effect next time, but, fortunately, the Truce intervened.

In conclusion it must be remembered that Martial Law was in force in the country from January, 1921 to the Truce. I.R.A. units ran very grave risks in exposing themselves and often faced danger courageously and with a morale equal to that of any army in the world. Men were never found to fail at the call of their responsible officers. Nearly in all cases the important services of the various units were performed during Curfew hours, but

God gave them strength and daring
To strike a blow for Erin,
The Irish Volunteers.

SIGNED: Thomas Golden

DATE: 24th September 1954

WITNESS:

P. O'Connell

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 1,680