ORIGINAL

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STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

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Witness

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Árd Mhuire,
11, Mount Prospect Avenue,
Clontarf,
DUBLIN.

Identity.

Adjutant, Dublin Brigade, I.R.A.

Subject.

'F' Company, 2nd Battalion, Dublin Brigade, I.R.A., 1915 - Truce.

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ORIGINAL

STATEMENT BY SENATOR HARRY COLLEY,

"Árd Mhuire", 11 Mount Prospect Avenue,
DUBLIN.

I joined the Volunteers about January, 1914, - "B" Company, 1st Battalion, at 41 Parnell Square. At that time there was a very large number of men in "B" Company and we were being drilled by ex-British Army Instructors. I suffered from slight deafness and occasionally I found the British Army accent of the Instructors impossible to understand. This rather worried me as I seemed on occasion to upset the whole Company. In addition to that, my chum who had joined with me, suddenly came to the conclusion that these men were in earnest and said to me that he had only joined for the fun of it. He said, "I think they mean to fight", and I said, "Of course, they do. Isn't that what they're here for?". He said, "I never meant to fight, I'm getting out". I always admired his moral courage about it, but in any event I fell out too on account of my hearing, but I kept on buying "The Volunteer" and other papers every week.

An advertisement appeared regularly in "The Volunteer" for the Auxiliary as a unit for those who could not attend the ordinary parades but who were prepared to help when the fight should come.

When I saw, as I thought, things developing, I decided to join the Auxiliary, so as to give a hand when anything happened, as I had come to the conclusion I'd never learn the drill. I did not know how to get in touch about the Auxiliary, but, at last, I got Frank Henderson's name and was told I'd see him on Thursday nights

at Father Matthew Park. I went down there and saw him. This was, I think, November or December 1915. I told him the whole position. He said to me, "Join the ranks. We'll make allowance for your deafness". I joined and, with a few others, I got special drill instruction and within a few weeks was able to take my place in the ranks with the rest.

Shortly after I had joined "F" Company, 2nd Battalion, one could feel the tension rising. Everybody seemed to expect to go into the fight at any moment. We were a very small Company. The largest number I remember seeing on parade at any time was, I think, thirty-two. I understand that at the split in 1914 over Redmond's declaration that the Volunteers had a "dual duty" and should join the British Army "to fight for small nations", "F" Company had been actually left with seven men.

At the time I joined, the officers of "F" Company were - Acting Captain-Frank Henderson (he became Captain very shortly after I joined); 1st Lieutenant - Oscar Traynor. (We had only one Lieutenant as our numbers were so small.)

Easter Week

A few weeks before /1916, it was ordered that a second Lieutenant be provided for "F" Company, and Pat Sweeney was elected. We used to meet on Thursday nights in Father Matthew Park. "F" Company was known as 'MacDonagh's own'.

One of my keenest recollections at that period in "F" Company is the tremendous camaraderie among the men. I remember that the second week I was there I seemed to be treated as if I had been there from the foundation of the Volunteers. Friendships formed then seemed to have a very lasting effect and, thank God, I still

number some of them amongst my greatest friends.

Each Sunday evening about 4 o'clock, we had rifle practice in Father Matthew Park. "F" Company men were all very keen and usually all members of the Company attended and went through their course with a Martini Mauser and .22 ammunition. We paid twopence for five rounds and were not allowed to spend more than fourpence owing to the scarcity of the ammunition. Occasionally, if rifles were available, we would practice volley-firing on a swinging tin-can.

One Sunday at rifle practice we learned that the house of the Volunteer who used to store the practice rifles had been raided the previous night but the rifle had not been found. The Captain asked me would I take it and store it, as my house was reasonably convenient to Father Matthew Park. I agreed. He stated I should have some protection when taking it away as the G-men were almost bound to follow me and find out where it was. After practice, myself and two other Volunteers proceeded down Philipsburg Avenue. I had the rifle slung on my shoulder. At the corner of Philipsburg Avenue and Fairview Strand two G-men were stationed as usual. We turned up Fairview Strand to Ballybough Bridge and after proceeding about fifty yards we noticed one of the G-men following us. We continued to the end of Richmond Road when we stopped, turned, and my two companions drew their revolvers and ordered him back. He immediately obeyed and went back towards Philipsburg Avenue. I got the rifle home without further incident and had it up to Easter Week.

One Sunday afternoon a few weeks before Easter Week 1916, after most of the men had gone, we discovered a posse of police under an Inspector on their way into Father Matthew Park. Lieutenant Oscar Traynor was the only officer present and he immediately took charge,

closed the gates and put two brothers, Kit and Mick Ennis, one on each side of the gate with the practice rifles and ordered the police to halt. The rest of us he lined along the wall with our revolvers which, at that stage, we always carried. I had a .32 revolver at that time and twelve rounds of ammunition. Lieutenant Traynor sent out word immediately to gather in other Volunteers. The police halted and then commenced to advance. He stepped to the gate and called out in a loud voice, "Halt, not one step further or I order fire". They halted and then retired, apparently for consultation. They remained at the end of Windsor Villas which led into Father Matthew Park, and stayed there. In the meantime men began rolling into Father Matthew Park from all quarters and, in less than an hour, I think there were nearly 200 men assembled from all units of the Dublin Brigade. When the police saw this they retired. It was my first experience of the initiative and military qualities of Oscar Traynor. It seems that there was a quantity of military material stored there though, at the time, I was unaware of it. After that Sunday and for the purpose of keeping ourselves in condition, we started to play football every Sunday in Father Matthew Park after rifle practice.

I recollect, about four to six weeks before Easter Week, when we were on parade, our Captain instructing us always to leave word at home when we were leaving where we could be found in a hurry as it might be necessary to mobilise us at any moment; and that, further, we should all go to Confession and keep ourselves in the state of grace for any eventuality. This, with the tension that had existed for a few weeks, impressed itself on my mind in such a way that I felt that the 'call' might come at any moment.

I remember one Sunday morning when the whole Battalion was on parade we were doubling round Father Matthew Park and after two rounds an elderly man fell out of the ranks. I discovered afterwards that this man was Matt Stafford who must have been at that time about 64 years of age, and that he had been "out" with the Fenians at Tallaght as a boy. I always think what marvellous energy and enthusiasm he must have possessed to be able to double two rounds of Father Matthew Park at that age. Matt Stafford was later a Senator for a number of years and died at 95 years of age.

On the Thursday week before Easter Sunday, 1916, we were instructed that we would be going on manoeuvres on Easter Sunday and that we were to carry two days' ration. We were told the whole Brigade would be engaged. On Holy Thursday we paraded as usual, and after some drill and outdoor work we were again paraded in the pavilion. Tom MacDonagh was now present and addressed us. He told us that the manoeuvres which were taking place on Easter Sunday were most important; that if any man was not prepared to fight, now was his time to get out, and that no one would think any the worse of him, but that every man who came out on Sunday should be prepared to fight. He mentioned that we need not worry about our dependents, that our friends in America had provided sufficient money to look after these. He did not tell us directly we were going out in rebellion but to me, at any rate, it was clear that the hour had come. When I got home that night, whilst having supper with my sister (now Mrs. Murphy, who was in Cumann na mBan and also in '16), she said to me, "Did you hear anything?" I said, "It's coming off on Sunday from what I could understand from Tom MacDonagh tonight.". She said, "I think so, too, from what I heard".

Immediately we started to make sure that all our equipment was in the best of order and arranged in such a manner that we could respond at a moment's notice. In the course of this I found that I wanted some extra buckles. These I procured and had fixed in Byrne's bootmaking shop in Summerhill. After collecting them on Holy Saturday I met Paddy Mahon, another member of "F" Company and we both agreed that tomorrow was "der tag".

Later, on my way home, I met Matty Parnell, another member of "F" Company, who unfortunately died about 1917. He told me that the people were all saying that there was going to be a revolution the next day.

On Easter Sunday morning, after early Mass, I was astounded on reading the countermanding order from Eoin McNeill in the "Sunday Independent". After consideration I decided to go down to my Company Captain's house to find out the position. Frank Henderson told me that he was waiting for exact instructions and did not know what the position really was. He instructed me to 'stand-to' and be prepared to respond at any moment. I stayed at home most of the evening with my equipment on the floor, ready to move at call. No word came, however, and somehow I got the idea "all was off" for the present.

On Easter Monday morning I set out on my bicycle for 11 o'clock Mass in Gardiner Street. On my way up Jones' Road I met the brothers McGinley and some other Volunteer. They asked me had I not got word and I said "No". They told me that they had received word to mobilise immediately at either Father Matthew Park or Jacob's Factory, and they were going to Father Matthew Park. I was living at that time in Clonliffe Road. I immediately went back

and got my equipment and discovered that a mobilisation order for me had arrived during my few minutes' absence. I had three rifles at the time and found that I had too much to carry, so I waited for the McGinleys and divided with them and proceeded to Father Matthew Park with them. My mother had gone to the 11 o'clock Mass before me, and I was rather glad as I thought I might have had some trouble in getting out, in which view I was very wrong, as will appear later. I was, at the time, her main support, there being only two younger sisters at home, one of whom had just started to work. They were both members of Cumann na mBan.

On arrival at Father Matthew Park we found a number of the various Companies of the 2nd Battalion assembled. Oscar Traynor approached me immediately and asked me what number of rounds I had for my revolver. I told him twelve. He brought me into the pavilion where there were quantities of ammunition of various sizes displayed. He went to the lot of .32 ammunition and dipping his two hands into the pile turned to me and said, "Take that - you'll want it. It will be all hand/fighting to hand we will have at first." I filled my pockets with it and retired. I learned from him subsequently that, at the time, he was thinking of the instructions he had received for our mobilisation on Easter Sunday. Under these instructions, it appears, we were to take over and occupy several places in the city. He, at this time, believed that the same programme was to be carried out but it did not develop in that way.

A large number of officers and men had reported direct to Jacob's Factory. The senior officer present at Father Matthew Park was Captain Tom Weafer. Frank Henderson was also there. After some little time a Miss Ryan, whom we all knew to be employed at

Volunteer Headquarters at 2 Dawson Street, and I understand was Secretary to Eoin MacNeill, arrived. I knew her as she lived on Clonliffe Road also. She told me that we were not going out, that it was only the Citizen Army that were out. She then reported to Tom Weafer and he called the other officers to him in the Pavilion. After some consultation between them he ordered us to fall-in and then informed us that he had received word that the Volunteers were not going out, that it was only the Citizen Army who were. He admitted that his instructions were that he was only to act on written orders but in view of the position of the person who had carried this message to him, the officers had decided to demobilise the men for the time being and make further enquiries.

We were instructed to keep together in groups adjacent to Father Matthew Park, and to leave the address with the mobilisers. The decision was received by some of the officers and men very unfavourably and, for a few moments, rather a heated argument developed, it being contended that the men would not be got together again. However, we were demobilised and I proceeded to my house at 69 Clonliffe Road, bringing with me seven or eight other Volunteers, amongst whom I can remember, the two McGinleys, the late Jack O'Reilly (who was afterwards in the Garda), and Joe Hutchinson.

My mother had returned by this time and she proceeded to give us a meal. Spirits were very high amongst the Volunteers, but we were naturally upset by the apparent confusion of the orders. We were recalling what we had learned in history of past endeavours to rebel, and hoped that ours would not fizzle out in the way some of them apparently did due to similar confusions.

About 2 0'clock word came that we were to re-mobilise at Father Matthew Park. My sister Gertie (now Mrs. Murphy) was also

there, awaiting orders, with Miss A. Wisley (now Mrs. Seán O'Moore), both of whom were members of the Fairview Branch of Cumann na mBan. They received instructions about the same time to report to the G.P.O. and actually left along with us. My younger sister Jenny (later Mrs. Nugent and now deceased) also reported but was sent home as there was nobody left with mother.

Immediately on receiving the mobilisation order we gathered our equipment and prepared to set out. Again I was rather fearful of the parting with my mother but she surprised me by taking me in her arms, kissing me and telling me to go and do my duty to my country. It made things much easier for me and indeed encouraged all the lads who were present.

When we arrived at Father Matthew Park men were beginning to roll in from various directions. I remember that shortly after arrival I found I had left a strap that I needed behind me. I did not want to go for it myself as we expected to be on the move immediately. I went to the gate, found a young boy whom I had noticed there before looking on at our activity with glowing and anxious eyes, and I asked him to go to Clonliffe Road for it. He returned in a few moments with it. In later years I discovered that this boy was Maurice Henderson, a brother of my Company Captain's, and who was afterwards in the I.R.A. during the Tan and Civil Wars.

We had all brought our bicycles with us and I lent mine to some other Volunteer, whose name I cannot recollect, who was being sent on some official errand. We had moved before he returned and I never saw my bicycle again. While we were waiting for further orders, Father MacDonald, now the Parish Priest in Fairview, who was

then C.C. in the same parish, came in and heard Confessions in the pavilion. When the order came to move he came out and gave general Absolution to the whole of us in the grounds of the Park. Quite suddenly we were ordered to fall-in and word passed round that the British Military with two machine guns were approaching from Dollymount where they had a camp and shooting range.

We were marched down Philipsburg Avenue, Fairview Strand, over Ballybough Bridge and were halted at the corner of Spring Garden Street on Ballybough Road. Here the first section were ordered up Spring Garden Street and I understand took possession of O'Meara's public house (now Bermingham's) at the corner of the North Strand and Annesley Place, from the roof of which they engaged the approaching military when they reached Annesley Bridge.

I was informed that the military took cover down the East Wall but pushed out the two machine guns and crews on to Annesley Bridge and opened fire on our men. With his first shot one of our men got one of the machine guns and put it out of action. Immediately this happened the machine gunners also retired down East Wall. It was apparently decided that our men should not pursue them as we were much the weaker in strength but this decision has also been adversely criticised.

The remainder of our party then moved along Ballybough Road to Summerhill Bridge where a portion of the second section, of which I was one, under Captain Breen, were ordered to take over a large tenement house which commanded the bridge. To turn out the occupants of this house and take over possession was not a very nice job for the first step in the rebellion but we did it in as kindly a fashion as we could and proceeded to barricade the windows and put it in a state of defence. While in possession there we heard the

firing on the North Strand. About quarter of an hour later we were ordered out and directed to convoy a lorry of ammunition and first aid outfits which were being taken from Father Matthew Park with us.

We were now under the command of the late Captain Breen and we proceeded down Summerhill Parade, Portland Row, North Strand, Talbot Street, to Liberty Hall. I remember seeing a number of policemen marching to Store Street Police Station, apparently being withdrawn off the streets, while we were passing through Talbot Street. At Liberty Hall we joined in with some Citizen Army men and a convoy of three or four carts laden with cabbage and other vegetables which had been commandeered at the North Wall, and proceeded to the G.P.O. There, James Connolly inspected us outside the G.P.O., and we then proceeded back to Fairview. This would be about 4 o'clock in the evening.

On this journey back we were accompanied by Sean T. O'Ceallaigh, now An tUachtarán, and at Annesley Bridge we took over the offices of the Dublin Manure Company (now the Royal Bank). The officer in charge now was Vincent Poole of the Citizen Army. I was put on outpost duty at Fairview corner, with instructions to hold up all cars and to make sure that they contained no British military. By this time the trams had all stopped running and it was rather pitiful to see the number of parents with young children, who had started out earlier for the seaside, trying to find their way home without any conveyances. Fortunately, the weather was very very good but many of them appeared very tired and footsore.

I was on this duty continuously till about 3 a.m. on Tuesday. My companion was relieved about 11 p.m. The late Paddy Fennelly,

who was Librarian in Charleville Mall Library and a well-known Gaelic Leaguer, brought me out some tea and sandwiches about midnight from his home in Cadogan Road.

About 1 a.m. I held up a pedestrian proceeding towards Clontarf. Immediately I stopped him I recognised him as a man who had come to Father Matthew Park that day some short time before we moved off. He had offered to join up and the only weapon we could give him was one of those small American .25 automatics. He had, as far as I knew, left the Park with the rest of us but somehow had got detached. When I held him up he immediately told me he had the automatic and that he was on his way to Harry Boland's house in Marino Crescent. He had somehow been in communication with him because he informed me that Harry and his brother would be along very shortly with rifles to join in with us. I was convinced of his sincerity and asked him to leave the automatic with me and I would let him proceed. About half an hour later he arrived back with Harry Boland and his brother, rifles and food. I sent him to the Manure Company Offices, now our local Headquarters.

I was relieved about 3 a.m. and was only about quarter of an hour in and just having a cup of tea when I was ordered out again due to some accident that had occurred. I went out again and was relieved about 5.30. About 6 o'clock Harry Boland who had been, I think, on duty somewhere in the meantime, the two brothers Whelan who had accompanied him and myself were directed to blow up the railway line beyond the slob lands. None of us knew anything about gelignite. I certainly had never even seen a stick of it previously and I think my three companions were in the same position. O/C. /Poole told us to dig a little hole in the ground under the tracks, to place the gelignite in it as he demonstrated for us, cover it

again with the soil, light the fuse and clear out. We were told it was a three minutes fuse. We did as directed, and in running down the embankment to get away I was so tired that when I tried to jump the small barbed wire fence at the foot of the embankment I muffed it and tore my thigh badly with the barbed wire. I had only got about twenty yards away when the explosion occurred. The job was a failure though we had carried out our instructions to the letter.

When we got back to the Manure Company Offices, Harry Boland and the two Whelans took some prisoner, a British Army man who had been held there, to the G.P.O. Boland had already informed Poole that he was going there, whether he liked it or not, and he gave him charge of the prisoner when he saw that he was determined to do so.

I asked for permission to go home to get another trousers and attend to the cuts in my leg. My house was only about three hundred yards distant. I asked him to send an escort with me if he wished. He refused. I had discovered that men from my own Company under Frank Henderson and Oscar Traynor were holding a house over Gilbey's at the corner of Fairview Strand which commanded the approach from Dollymount and also Ballybough Bridge. I made up my mind I was going to join them to enable me to get some treatment for the wound, so I simply walked over Annesley Bridge down Cadogan Road and joined in.

When I reported there, the first men I met were Frank Henderson and Oscar Traynor. Oscar immediately produced a bottle of whiskey which he rubbed into the wound, with the remark, "You are the first casualty I have seen in this rebellion." He then

sent two men, of whom I remember Paddy Mahon was one, with me to my home where I changed my trousers and reported back. I was then instructed to lie down on one of the beds and have a few hours' rest.

Some hours later I was one of a party who went with Oscar Traynor to collect arms and equipment from two men, one in Clonliffe Avenue and the other in Richmond Road, both of whom had failed to turn out. Strange as it may seem, the man in Clonliffe Avenue was the man who had actually left the mobilisation order at my house the previous morning while I was out.

As well as Gilbey's, our men also occupied Lambe's public house on Richmond Road (now Meagher's). Frank Henderson was in charge of this outpost. A man named Seán Kerr was Quartermaster and cook. I remember we commandeered bread from a baker's cart and a sheep from an adjacent butcher's. Scouts on bicycles were thrown out along the Howth Road and through Drumcondra.

About 5 or 6 o'clock in the evening (Tuesday) we got orders to fall-in. We took with us all spare arms, ammunition, equipment and food. We were paraded outside Gilbey's on Fairview Strand and marched over Ballybough Bridge towards Summerhill. The men under Poole from the Manure Company's Offices joined in with us at the corner of Poplar Row and Ballybough Road. Before we had got half way along Ballybough Road the pace became terrific. I'm afraid our unit did not present a very soldierly appearance as we were all greatly loaded and we commenced to straggle. We had heard rumours that the military were closing in on us and we knew that one of our scouts had reported some time earlier that troops were proceeding down the Howth Road. We had heard that the enemy

was occupying Amiens Street Station. I was at the end of the Column and I rather feared passing the top of Buckingham Street and Summerhill as I argued to myself that the troops from Amiens Street would certainly occupy the loopline, and whilst the head of the Column might get by that wide street in safety there was a poor chance for those of us at the end. However, my fears were groundless as nothing happened.

In Summerhill a woman on the footpath called to Frank Henderson and he halted the Column and went over to her and spoke to her for a few minutes. He then came back, gave us "quick march" and proceeded down to Parnell Street, turned up Cumberland Street, again into Marlboro' Street, along Marlboro' Street to Sackville Place, up Sackville Place where there was a barricade at the head near O'Connell Street. After a few minutes delay we marched through a gap in the barricade in single file and across the road to the G.P.O. Here an incident occurred which I never could quite understand. As we were crossing the road we first got cheers from the men in the G.P.O. and immediately afterwards bullets were flying around us, so much so we had to run for shelter under the pillars of the G.P.O. I remember hearing The O'Rahilly, who met us, remark, "A good hundred rounds of ammunition wasted". The explanation, as we got it, was that some of the men believed we were a country contingent which had made its way to Dublin and, in jubilation, started firing their rifles, never of course intending to hit us, but they came uncomfortably close. I would like to say here that subsequently I found that when Frank Henderson had reported to the G.P.O. about the military on Howth Road that Connolly sent him word to retire on the G.P.O. as fast as he could and hoped he could succeed. Connolly informed Captain Henderson

that the military were also proceeding down Clonliffe Road and North Circular Road and that, as we were virtually in a trap, we could only make the best fight we could in our efforts to get through. The woman in Summerhill told Frank that the Lancers were in North Great George's Street and he told me he had intended to proceed down Parnell Street past North Great George's Street only for getting this information. If we had we would certainly have been caught in an exposed position and undoubtedly would have suffered some casualties.

On arrival at the G.P.O. we were lined up and Pearse addressed us. The main points from his address that stick in my mind were his insistence that by getting out successfully we had performed a great deed; that we had lifted the stain that had rested on Dublin's fair name since Emmet's execution had been carried out without protest from Dublin citizens. When he had concluded James Connolly took over and ordered the last twelve files, of whom I was one, to proceed across the road to the Imperial Hotel although I was only about ten or fifteen minutes in the G.P.O.

In the Imperial Hotel we were under the command of Frank Thornton then going under the name of Drennan. We were directed to positions at the windows. We proceeded to break the glass and barricade with the furniture available. Some time later I was called to a meal and met some of the Irish Citizen Army men who had retired from the Mail Office after the fight there. If my memory serves me one of them was one of the brothers King. During the meal he gave me a rather good account of the fight at the City Hall and Evening Mail Office.

At this time we all had the idea that the whole country had risen in our support and, therefore, under reasonably sanguine conditions, we could make a fight of it. The night passed uneventfully. The next morning firing opened from the enemy but was mainly directed at the G.P.O. We could see our men on the roof of the G.P.O. replying to that fire and moving along under the parapet. We had men sniping from the roof of the Imperial Hotel also. During that day we were taken by our O/C down to a men's outfitters' shop, adjacent to Clery's, and ordered to outfit ourselves with overcoats snd boots for a probable march to the country districts. We made out formal bills, detailing each item which we took, which we signed and were counter-signed by the O/C.

During that day also the walls between the various buildings were telescoped so that access could be had right from the corner of Earl Street to Sackville Place.

About 12 o'clock on Wednesday the late Mrs. Redmond, wife of Paddy Redmond, a member of "F" Company, who was out in the rebellion and who had been caretaker at Father Matthew Park, visited us and took messages from us to our homes. How she succeeded in getting there under fire or getting back is something I don't understand as we believed that there was now a complete cordon around us. She did, however, succeed in getting my message to my mother.

During the day a priest, whom I understood was Father Headley, O.P., from Dominick Street Church, crossed the road from the G.P.O. to us. He was fired on heavily but succeeded in making the Imperial without mishap. He heard confessions and gave general absolution, and had to remain with us until darkness fell.

Sometime during the day a man who, in my view, did not appear to be in his right mind, was demanding admission at the door of the G.P.O. for some time and did not pay any heed to the instructions of those inside to go away. Later he proceeded to cross the road towards our building but immediately heavy machine gun fire was opened on him and he fell in the middle of the road, apparently riddled with bullets. He died very soon afterwards.

We had with us in that building, two Cumann na mBan girls, Miss May Gahan and another girl whose maiden name I forget but who was afterwards Mrs. Murphy, wife of the late Michael Murphy of 1, Leinster Avenue, North Strand, and who is now deceased. Michael was a member of "F" Company and one of the Imperial garrison with myself, and met his future wife there.

A big part of that night I was on guard duty at the entrance to the Imperial. I remember a rather amusing incident that occurred during that time. The streets were bare, of course, and the electric carbon lamps, which were still lighting, were fitful. I thought I saw a face looking out from the corner of Prince's Street at the Metropole and was practically sure somebody was there apparently in a position about to make a run for it. After some intense watching, and during a period when the lamp seemed to shine brighter than heretofore, I suddenly realised that it was an advertisement card with a picture of "The Thinking Man" in the doorway of Kapp & Peterson's Tobacco Shop which was situated at that corner at that time.

The next morning I was washing myself when the first shells fell at 8 o'clock. I remember that Gerald Crofts was with me at the time and we were trying to work out what would be the effect of this shelling on us. At the time I don't think either of us

realised that they could be incendiary shells. One might think that the effect of the shelling would be to create panic, but, speaking for myself, and as far as I could see amongst my companions, it did not have any effect whatever. A couple of hours later we could see fires starting in the G.P.O. and very shortly after that Frank Thornton came round and informed us that the rere of our building was on fire. Every effort was made to cope with it, but unsuccessfully, and it kept growing in intensity all day. As soon as darkness fell we were ordered to evacuate and we proceeded through the holes made in the walls, in some cases climbing down and up ladders through other floors, until we reached a premises leading into North Earl Street. This we crossed to another doorway out to Cathedral Street and from there we marched in double file down Thomas' Lane by the side of the Cathedral and out into Findlater's Place. We turned towards Marlboro' Street, crossed it and up Gloucester Street (now Seán McDermott Street). We were informed that our objective was to break out to Fairview. By this time we had realised that the two officers now in charge, Frank Thornton and Brennan Whitmore, who had been in charge of the block of buildings at the corner of Earl Street and O'Connell Street, were, neither of them local men. Paddy McGinley, who was my companion on this march, and I came to the conclusion that we could never break out to Fairview on Thursday night when we had had to retire from it on the Tuesday night.

We spoke to Frank Thornton in Thomas' Lane and asked him to let us break into the Gresham and take it over or alternatively let us crawl across O'Connell Street in the shadow of the Pillar to our comrades in the G.P.O. However, we proceeded as I have set out. When some distance up Seán McDermott Street, machine-gun

fire suddenly opened on us. We took refuge in houses but found that most of the doors were locked. This was most unusual as we knew that these were tenement houses where the doors were always open. Apparently the doors had been closed on orders from the British. A party of us succeeded in getting one open and we took shelter. After some time I found myself with only one companion, Flanagan. We could not see what became of our companions and a search that we made quietly of the houses revealed nothing. Flanagan and I discussed the position in which we found ourselves and came to the conclusion that if we were captured there we would be just put up against the wall and shot. We decided that we would make a break for it even if we had to die that way, that it would be preferable. We accordingly set out, I leading, and made a zig-zag run up the street. Immediately very heavy fire, both machine gun and rifle, opened on us. I came to the conclusion, while on that run, that I had a charmed life as bullets seemed to be hopping like rain around me. The only one I felt was one that hit me above the ankle. Suddenly I saw a barricade about ten yards in front of me with British soldiers firing over it at me. I already had my bayonet fixed. I charged, jumped on the barricade and lunged at the soldier on the other side. As I did I fell on the barricade and found that I was not able to rise. I had been wounded but did not know it until I had occasion to put effort into it. The soldier had also lunged at me with his bayonet and got me in the thigh as I was falling. I then began to feel pain all over and was moaning. Suddenly the old spirit re-asserted itself and I decided I was not going to let these British soldiers hear me moaning. I suppressed it. Shortly afterwards he caught me by the back of the collar, pulled me up to the top of the barricade. Apparently others of our men were making the same

effort and the British were still firing at them. The soldier put the rifle across my back taking cover behind me and kept on firing for some time. I will say in fairness to him that I think he thought I was dead. I was now absolutely helpless and found I was unable to move whatsoever. Some few minutes later he again caught me by the back of the neck and pulled me over to his side of the barricade and let me fall. My head stuck in the back of a chair which formed part of the barricade and my body fell over. I thought my neck was broken. I must have gone unconscious at this period for the next I knew was that there were some R.A.M.C. men carrying flashlights and a stretcher. A Corporal of the R.A.M.C. was stooping over me and he raised himself and said, "Take him gently, boys, he appears to be very badly hurt". I shall always remember the humane and christian attitude of that R.A.M.C. Corporal.

I was placed on the stretcher and brought away. From this on I had intermittent spells of consciousness and unconsciousness. When I awoke up I was informed I was in a dressing station in Gardiner Street and there was an old woman dressed in nurse's uniform there. She asked me my name and address and then started to try and secure information from me as to our numbers and positions, telling me I would be taken home as soon as I gave it. I told her there was nothing doing, that they would have to get their information otherwise.

When I came to at one period I found an orderly pouring iodine from a bottle on my chest and, strange as it may seem, I did not feel it, I was in such pain already. At another period when I came to I heard a voice behind me saying, "Take him to St. George's, he is badly wounded and I don't think has a chance. At any rate he deserves it for mixing up with that crew". He then noticed I was

awake and came over and said, "Oh! you are awake." I said, "Yes". "I am a doctor", he said, "you are badly wounded and I am sending you to hospital". "Are you?" I said, "I would not have thought it from the statement I have just heard you make". He ground his teeth and walked away.

When they were searching me they found in my pockets two of our home-made bombs and a box of Paterson's matches, also three .25 automatics and one of the Tommies said, "He's a bloody arsenal."

Some time later I was placed in an ambulance and found my colleague Flanagan was also there. I was on a stretcher but he was able to sit up, being wounded in the arm. There were also two other stretcher cases and an orderly in the ambulance. We were proceeding along when I suddenly heard a should "Halt!" The driver did not stop. There was another shout of "Halt, or we fire!" He still proceeded and there was then a shout in several voices "Halt, or we fire!". But he did not stop. A volley then rang out and one bullet apparently hit the front of the ambulance right at my feet, and I felt my whole limbs pushed right up into my body though I was not wounded further. Flanagan was now wounded in the shoulder and the orderly cried out, "Driver, stop, stop, I'm hit!" The next I heard was the orderly saying, "Officer, we were taking some of your men to hospital and you have fired on us and wounded us". A voice answered, "Why did you not halt when ordered?", and there was no reply. There was some further parleying that I could not hear, and after a few minutes the ambulance turned, started to proceed back the way it had come, and after a few minutes stopped.

I do not remember much about the time immediately after this as I must have been again unconscious, but I was informed that the ambulance broke down and that we were lying there for about two hours before being transferred to another one. The orderly was wounded in the shoulder and was afterwards a patient in the Castle Hospital while I was there. The driver had been shot through the lung and later received a medal for gallantry for continuing to drive the ambulance while wounded. I am not sure what happened to the other occupants.

On my arrival in Frongoch later one of the first men I met was the late Paddy McGrath who had been a school chum and a friend of my own, and was a member of the Four Courts garrison. In the course of conversation about Easter Week it turned out that he was one of the men who had taken part in the firing on the ambulance described above. He explained to me that the British had been using ambulances to bring men up the far side of the Quays and dump them out into cover under the quay wall to open fire on our men at the barricades. Word had been sent to the British that in future all ambulances moving on either side of the Quays would be halted, and that if they did not halt, fire would be opened; and it was in pursuance of this ultimatum that the incident took place.

The next thing I remember was being carried up some steps on a stretcher with lights blazing around. I was informed it was the Castle Hospital. The stretchers were placed on trestles, in rows, in a big room, and nurses and doctors began to examine us. I have only a recollection of a very brief period at that time. Subsequently, however, I came to and found a doctor in civilian clothes pacing up and down between the stretchers. When he noticed I was conscious again he came to me and said, "I do not wish to

wish to appear brutal but I think you should know that you are dying. You have not got half an hour to live. Make your peace with God and prepare to meet Him." I cannot recollect this doctor's name but I was informed subsequently by one of the nurses that he was a well known specialist from Merrion Square. I must have relapsed into unconsciousness almost immediately but subsequently when I awoke I found a man in military uniform waiting beside me. He told me he was a priest and that I was dying, and he would like to hear my confession and administer the Sacraments. He was not wearing a collar. Immediately the story of the "Croppy Boy" ran through my mind and, though I was now only able to say one word at a time, I asked him how was I to know he was a priest, where was his collar or his stole? He told me they were at the top of the building, that I was in the Castle Hospital, that I might be dead by the time he got them. I do not know where the strength came from but I shouted at him, as the nurses often referred to afterwards, "Go away, go away, and take those clothes off you." I again relapsed into unconsciousness after the effort.

When I came to again the same gentleman was walking up and down with no coat on him, a plaid waistcoat, a clerical collar and his stole, and was reading his breviary. He came to me immediately, heard my confession and annointed me. He explained that he had been held up in Dublin by the rebellion while on his way to the Front to act as a Chaplain. I learned from one of the nurses that he was a Father Murphy from Carlow, and years later when I referred to this incident in a lecture, an "Independent" newspaper reporter, recognising some of the things I said would apply to Canon Murphy of Borris, saw the Canon and confirmed the story. The Canon had a distinct recollection of the incident

also. I was fortunately able to go down to see him in Borris and renew acquaintance.

My next recollection is waking up in a bed with a nurse on each side and screens around me. One of the nurses told me I was dying, to say my prayers. I told her I could not pray and asked them to do so and I would follow them. I remember distinctly following the Rosary to the second Hail Mary of the fourth decade when I relapsed into unconsciousness again. This must have been about 5 or 5.30 a.m. as I could hear the other patients washing which I subsequently found took place around that time. I did not waken from that spell until 5 or 6 o'clock in the evening when I found the same conditions but only one nurse. She seemed rather astonished when she saw I was awake and immediately rushed for a doctor. He came and asked me how was I, and I told him I was alright now. Some weeks later, when I was on the mend, the same doctor came to me and referred to this incident. He told me that they were very interested in my case from the medical point of view as, according to medical science, I should be dead. He asked me why I said at the time "I was alright now". I told him that on each of the previous occasions when I came back to consciousness I could feel the blood pumping out of me but that, on that occasion, I found the bleeding had ceased. My mind argued sub-consciously that, as I was still alive, and the bleeding had ceased, the worst was over. He said that it was a logical explanation but was not much use to them from the medical point of view.

I lay in that bed without moving for a fortnight and I was a full month there before I was able to raise myself sufficiently to

see the ward. There were apparently some more of our men in this ward but after some days they were all moved to one part of the building upstairs and put under guard. I was left by myself amongst the British Tommies for six weeks before I was transferred to my own colleagues. Amongst our men there were Cathal Brugha, Dan McCarthy, Noel Lemass, a London-Irishman named Tierney who died about 1917 or 1918, Mick Dowling, a lad named Greene, Seán O'Keeffe, Billy Browne, Tom Harris - later T.D. for Kildare, Paddy Daly, P.J. Murray, - Cremin, Murphy (Bricklayer), - Murphy (Hairdresser) Harry Manning, Andy Furlong, Joe Kenny, W. Gibson (father and son), - Howlett, Joe O'Gorman, Joe Downey (Inchicore), Kevin O'Carroll (Rathfarnham), - Halpin, - Redigan.

Unfortunately I cannot recollect the names of many of the nurses but I do remember a Nurse Kelly, a red-haired girl, and a Nurse Coughlan who, I believe, is now resident at 62 Dame Street, Dublin. Dr. Hooper was Resident doctor under Superintendent Carew.

We were treated very well in the Castle Hospital, though in the early stages it was evident that many of the nurses looked upon us as rioters or gangsters, but before we were taken away we had converted several of them to our view.

We were allowed two visits a week from relatives and when the fine weather came we were, on occasion, brought down to the garden for exercise. On these occasions I was carried in a chair by two orderlies up and down the stairs. Men were being taken away in batches and about the beginning of July there were only about fifteen left. About the middle of July all of us except three were removed one Saturday afternoon to Kilmainham gaol. Among those three left were, Cathal Brugha, Cremin and Greene, all of whom suffered from

severe leg injuries and were apparently too bad to be handed over to military custody. The sister in charge objected strongly to the removal of myself and some others on the grounds that we were not fit to be sent to prison. However, we were put on the lorry and brought away. We were in Kilmainham until the following Monday afternoon. Word of our transfer to Kilmainham seemed to have got out very rapidly as on Monday morning most of us had visits from relatives and, amongst others, some men who had just been released from Frongoch.

About 3 o'clock on the Monday we were formed up and marched to the North Wall under escort. We were marched two deep and my companion was Tierney. I had never been allowed to walk before and we were not long on the journey when I naturally began to feel the effects. Poor Tierney seemed just as bad and in fact the whole batch of men were suffering from the strain. Several of the escort were heard to remark that we should never have been marched but should have been taken in lorries. When crossing O'Connell Bridge, Tierney tripped his foot in a tram track. I automatically grabbed him by the arm to prevent him falling and the strain of doing so seemed to take every scrap of energy I had from me.

From that on we were practically holding each other up. I must say that the escort were very humane as far as their position allowed them to be.

We had on this journey our first real evidence of the change of opinion amongst the people. When we reached the centre of the city crowds cheered us and began to follow us. Some of them apparently went to shops and bought fruit and cakes which they handed to us. More gave us money, and in every way that they could they

showed their sympathy. We heard several harsh comments on the military for making men in our condition march.

When we reached the boat we were put down in the hold immediately. Some of my colleagues immediately fixed up a coil of rope for a pillow for me in the corner of a bulkhead and put me stretched out there. The boat did not sail for several hours and I was unable to move until sailing time and then only with difficulty. Crowds had again collected on the Quays and they gave us a hearty send-off. We could hear them very distinctly though we could only see a small part of them through the portholes. We were not allowed on deck until we were out in the Bay.

We arrived at Hollyhead at about 12.30 a.m. and were handed over to a new escort in charge of some English officer who, apparently, thought he knew how to handle Irish rebels. We were singing rebel songs and as soon as he took over he ordered silence which, of course, was a signal for us to make more noise. He again ordered silence and Paddy Daly suggested "The Soldier's Song". We struck up "The Soldier's Song" while he called up a file of soldiers. He then shouted that if we would not cease he would open fire. He gave orders to his men and brought them to the position of awaiting the order to fire.. We still kept on singing. A crowd of English civilians had gathered round and now seemed to be getting panicky. Some women screeched,"He is going to shoot them", a few times. He looked at them and he looked at us. Then he shook his head, handed us over to his Lieutenant and disappeared and we never saw him for the rest of the journey.

We then were put into the train under guard. The carriages were very narrow between the seats and there was hardly room to sit

without knocking knees with the man opposite. They were, of course, crowded to full capacity. We proceeded to Chester, I think, where we kept shunting round for about three hours. I remember it was a rather trying ordeal on all of us as we were wounded men and most of us had not yet recovered. We were trying to sleep and just as one would be falling off the engine would start up again and waken one up. About 6 a.m. we proceeded to Rhyl and after some half hour of shunting at this junction we were brought straight to Frongoch. During the whole journey we got neither food nor drink; our last meal had been about 3 p.m. on the Monday.

We arrived at Frongoch about 11.30 a.m. on Tuesday. Most of us were in a pretty bad way by this time, principally for want of a drink. We were brought in and lined up and addressed by the British Army Camp Commandant nicknamed "Buckshot". He told us the rules about keeping away from the barbed wire etc., and used the usual phrase about being filled with buckshot if we disobeyed.

We were then marched out to the ground floor of the old distillery where we were given our bag of straw as a bed. We got nothing to eat until dinner time after which most of us lay down to try and recover some strength though we were warned that this was quite contrary to orders. I was agreeably surprised that night when we were all locked up to find the great good spirit and camaraderie amongst our men. There was an impromptu concert for about an hour before the Rosary was said.

At this time I was suffering very severe pain in the lung and at times it became so bad that I simply could not stand up with it. The next morning as I was crossing the compound it got very bad and

I found I could not get across. I had to lie down in the middle of the compound. Some of my colleagues then told me that I should go to the hospital and I found on enquiry that I could not be admitted until a doctor had examined me which could not be done until the next morning. When I applied to him then he examined me and immediately ordered me into hospital. I was no sooner fixed up here than I was ordered to London, to appear before the Sankey Commission. We were to proceed the next morning. Tom O'Donoghue of the Citizen Army (now Rev. Thomas O'Donoghue,P.P., of St. Joseph's, Rawmarsh, Rotterham, Yorks) then told me that I would never be able to eat the food, particularly the bread, in Wormwood Scrubbs. He told me he would see me later, which he did, and presented me with a nice small white loaf. On the journey to London we were supplied with tea and were brought from Paddington to Wormwood Scrubbs by bus. It was interesting to find when proceeding on this journey a few people standing taking off their hats and cheering.

The next morning we were paraded to be interviewed by the Commission. There were some of our chaps, who had been sent up in a previous batch but who, due to some mishap, had not been heard at the ordinary time, lined up at the other side of the square. While looking around I saw one of my Company, Jack McDonnell, on the opposite side of the square. He suddenly looked up and saw me and seemed to become upset. The next minute he rushed out of the ranks across the square and I moved to meet him. He shook hands and said, "I've been praying for you every night, I understood you were killed." The guards then separated us.

We were sent back to Frongoch the following day. During my two days there I had not been able to eat a bit, though I drank the

so-called tea alright. I was not ten minutes on the train, however, when I found myself ravenously hungry. I then thought of my white loaf and produced it. It was immediately snapped from me as all the fellows seemed to be in the same condition. We then divided it amongst the six of us in the carriage, and I don't think any men ever enjoyed a small piece of white bread more than we did. I remember that Paddy Daly was one of the six and another man whose name I cannot recollect but who had been a Company Captain in Carrickmacross was another. We arrived back in Frongoch that evening and found that during our absence the North Camp had been closed and that those who had been still left in it had been transferred to the South Camp. Amongst these I was glad to find my old colleagues, Frank Henderson and Oscar Traynor

A week or ten days later, which time I spent mostly in the hospital, I was released. We had a very fine journey home and arrived, if my memory serves me correctly, on the first Friday in August. One of my companions on this journey home was again Paddy McGinley who had been my colleague on the march from the Imperial Hotel just before we were fired on.

I found that an elder sister,Mary, was now at home. Mary had been away at Easter Week, but, as soon as she heard of the rebellion, had resigned her job and came home to keep Mother company, believing Mother would be alone. My three sisters were busy working for the National Aid Committee looking after the dependants of the men who were still locked up. My health was in a bad way and the doctor informed me my lung was completely shattered and torn. My left shoulder was four inches lower than my right. He advised working in the open air as much as I could.

So some couple of weeks later I went with a brother of Fr. Tom O'Donoghue's down to relatives of his near Knockananagh, County Wicklow. I spent about four weeks there carrying out the doctor's orders as far as my strength allowed, and returned much improved. I was encouraged and elated with the change of outlook I found in the people. Everybody now seemed to have come to our way of thinking and approved of our action in Easter Week.

I was no sooner back from the country than I found that the Volunteers who were available were trying to find a hall in which to reform our ranks. The Cumann na mBan were also seeking a place. My sister Gertie (Mrs. Murphy) put an advertisement in the "Mail" for a meeting place for a sewing class. Through an answer she received she got in touch with a converted coach-house with several rooms overhead at the rere of a house on Clonliffe Road, having an entrance from the avenue up to the Holy Cross Chapel, Clonliffe College. It was bounded on the north and east sides by the grounds of Clonliffe College. It was owned by a Mrs. Gleeson. The Cumann na mBan informed the Volunteers of this find and we advised the girls to take it immediately, which they did. We started a social club as a cover for Volunteer activities, and the building became known as Clonliffe Hall.

I was elected Secretary of the social club and we ran céilí and old-time dances every Wednesday and Sunday at which there used to be a very full attendance.

Immediately on securing the hall a mobilisation of the men of the 2nd Battalion, who were available, was made, and we paraded in our various units in the hall. At a meeting of fifteen or sixteen of us of "F" Company, Jack McDonnell was elected O/C,;

Charlie Saurin, 1st Lieutenant and myself 2nd Lieutenant. Tom Slater, who had been Battalion Adjutant in 1916, was Battalion O/C. It was distinctly understood that these elections were only temporary until the return of the old officers and main body of men. We kept in touch, and held parades, made efforts to locate and gather in any arms or ammunition that were available, and otherwise tried to keep the men together for further eventualities.

When the general release of the men in Frongoch took place at Christmas 1916, they were agreeably surprised to find on their return home that we had a place of meeting and had kept together. In the very first week of January, 1917, a parade of "F" Company took place at which the old officers took over and at which I was appointed Company Quartermaster. We proceeded immediately to recruit and within a few months we could hardly accommodate the number of Volunteers in "F" Company. At one stage it actually numbered 160. We had various outdoor manoeuvres on Sundays. We tried to study military tactics: various problems in military exercises would be set for us and we would be examined individually as to how we would deal with them. At this stage Dick McKee became O/C. 2nd Battalion, and Mick McDonnell became Battalion Quartermaster.

We made every effort to secure arms and were comparatively fortunate, considering the intense enemy activity. During the year 1917 we got about one dozen revolvers and four rifles for "F" Company.

Clonliffe Hall became the scene of great Volunteer activity and naturally before very long attracted the attention of the "G" Division. We used regularly see them patrolling in Clonliffe Road

and we knew that enquiries were being made during the daytime. There was one window from the second storey of Clonliffe Hall which overlooked the grounds of Clonliffe College. We fastened a rope at the inside of this window which we could throw out and slide down and escape across Clonliffe College grounds. After some months Detective Smith called officially on the landlord and enquired the names of the tenants - who were my sister Gertie and three other Cumann na mBan girls and then, with an Inspector, called at my house, 69 Clonliffe Road, and asked for Harry Colley, not Gertie Colley, though my name had not appeared anywhere in connection with it. I was absent and, though he called a few times, he never got in touch with me.

The release of Commandant De Valera and the other sentenced men in July, 1917, had a wonderful effect on morale and led to a very large influx of recruits. About this period "F" Company numbered over 200 men. Dick McKee was promoted O/C. Brigade, and Frank Henderson O/C. 2nd Battalion. Oscar Traynor became O/C. of "F" Company with Pat Sweeney as 1st Lieutenant and Paddy Mahon 2nd Lieutenant.

We had several Sunday manoeuvres in the early part of 1918. On Sunday 9th March, 1918, when "F" Company were drilling a few miles north of Kilmore Cross, scouts brought the word that R.I.C. men held all the roads around us. The O/C., Oscar Traynor, sent me to the road with instructions to send word if the R.I.C. arrived in force, but I was not to heed small numbers of them. Shortly afterwards a District Inspector and a Sergeant arrived and, following my instructions, I did not send any word. They went into the field and the O/C. carried on as if there were no enemies present. After some time they withdrew, and we were formed up in twos and taken right through the fields down to the corner of the Yellow Lane and Beaumont Road. There we touched the road for the first time. We went for some few hundred yards up Puckstown road, now Collins Avenue, and took to the fields,

again, right down to Father Matthew Park. Here we were reformed into fours and marched down Philipsburg Avenue to Ballybough and dismissed. We did not see any more R.I.C. men that day. The following Sunday, 16th March, 1918, the Battalion were on manoeuvres in the same vicinity and before we started home we were given a rest. During that interval I heard that the R.I.C. were approaching in force and that probably there would be some arrests. At the time it was our policy to fill the jails so as to make it inconvenient for them to arrest any more. We were marched towards Dublin and after about a mile we found D.M.P. men drawn across the road,shoulder to shoulder, from hedge to hedge, six or eight ranks deep. The District Inspector, who had been on the job the previous Sunday, was present and seemed to be in charge. He immediately picked out Oscar Traynor and also Dick McKee, Frank Henderson and Pat Sweeney. These four they arrested and, though we deliberately charged the police and pulled their legs from under them, they absolutely refused to arrest any more. Ultimately they got into their lorries with the four prisoners and departed. We marched in and at Fairview we found some more D.M.P. but, while there was a bit of a rumpus, they only arrested one Volunteer, Eddie O'Mahony. On the 18th March, the four officers were tried in the Dublin District Court, when Dick McKee, speaking for the whole of them, refused to recognise the Court.. I think this was one of the first cases where our men took that line. They were sentenced to three months each, I think, and were sent to Dundalk Jail.

In April, 1918, the threat of conscription on Irishmen to fight for Britain in the Great War came definitely to a head.

Lloyd George announced on the 15th April that if recruiting in Ireland during the following six months did not reach a certain figure he would enforce conscription, and had an assurance from Lord French, who was then Lord-Lieutenant, that he would be able to enforce conscription on Ireland. Since 1916, recruiting for the British forces in Ireland had fallen off very severely. From all the information I could get, Headquarters believed the threat was made in earnest. We accordingly set out to train all our men to be able to cycle and to learn all the roads, tracks and bye-ways over the Dublin Mountains. It was believed that, owing to our paucity in arms and ammunition, the only chance of effective fighting we would have would be in some such place as the mountains, and it was understood by all Volunteers that in the event of the attempt to enforce conscription we would all take to the hills. Parcels of iron rations and first-aid outfits were supplied to all ranks. The Cumann na mBan at this time were very busy preparing these for us. We intensified our training and had a number of outdoor manoeuvres and several night manoeuvres, and we were instructed to keep fit to enable us to stand any hardships that might ensue.

The threat of conscription brought a tremendous inrush of recruits and it was decided that they would be kept in separate Companies until events materialised.

Lloyd George announced the enforcement of conscription on Ireland on the 15th October. On Thursday the 10th October, "F" Company met on parade as usual and a number of men were ordered off for special guard duty on an important meeting of the Executive that was being held nearby. Following that meeting we

learned that Headquarters believed the British would start to enforce conscription the following Tuesday and that the Volunteers were going to resist to the best of their ability.

On Saturday the 13th, Germany sent word to America asking for an armistice on the basis of the fourteen points of President Wilson, from which overture peace ultimately emerged. The effect of it was that conscription on Ireland was not enforced as had been intended.

Shortly after this most of the men in these special companies who had joined under the threat of conscription fell away very considerably but a small number remained. Amongst them there turned out to be some very good Volunteers who were distributed among the various Companies of the Battalion. The two brothers O'Reilly - Paddy and Seamus - were allotted to "F" Company. Paddy became Battalion Quartermaster and was killed at the battle of the Custom House on 25th May, 1921. His younger brother Stephen, 16 years old, who had only recently joined the Volunteers but who had already been Assistant Battalion Adjutant, was killed with him.

In December, 1918, a General Election was held and in the week preceding it Dick Coleman, who had fought at Ashbourne in 1916, died in Usk Prison. His remains were taken to Ireland and kept in the vaults of Westland Row Church until the Sunday, the day following the Election. The Castle Authorities had, at first, prohibited any public display by the Volunteers at his funeral and sent word to this effect through the Lord Mayor of Dublin. A reply was sent from the Volunteers that "arrangements had been made and would be carried out". Further messages were sent by the

Castle Authorities each of them dropping one or more of the prohibitions they had originally made, against "marching in military formation"; "the firing party", and such like. To each of these messages the same reply - set out above - was returned by the Volunteers. The position of the Castle Authorities on the Sunday was that the funeral would be allowed to proceed but the Volunteers would not be permitted to march back in military formation. There was, of course, no guarantee as to what might actually happen as the Volunteers had not agreed to any proposition that had been made.

The Volunteers that day had orders to carry "small arms concealed". "F" Company were chosen to act as rearguard. Before the funeral moved off we had taken up a position in Holles Street. Our O/C., Oscar Traynor, drew me aside and informed me of the above-mentioned messages from the Castle Authorities. Aware that I knew each man in "F" Company who had a gun, and the type of gun he carried, he instructed me to rearrange the Company, quietly and without attracting attention, so that the men with the heaviest guns were at the rear. He further instructed me that, as trouble was anticipated, I was to keep a sharp look-out and to send a report to him on anything that developed. I was to take charge of that end of the Company, to hold fire unless actually fired on, but, in that event, I was to order fire in reply immediately. I carried out his instructions so that the Company was arranged that all men carrying .45 revolvers were at the rear: those carrying .38's immediately in front of them; then those carrying .32's; then those carrying .25's, and the unarmed men to the front of the Company.

The funeral proceeded to Glasnevin. When we reached Doyle's Corner, Phibsboro', I noticed five or six Army lorries

pulling up in Phibsboro' Road on the south side of the North Circular Road. Large number of police descended from these lorries, all carrying .45 revolvers in holsters. They formed up in fours and marched up Phibsboro' Road, their head in line with the tail of "F" Company. I sent word to Oscar Traynor who relayed it to Dick McKee, whose reply was, I understand, that if anything happened he was sure Traynor would give a good account of himself.

Nothing happened until we left Glasnevin cemetery by the old gate at Prospect Avenue. We then found that the police had a cordon right across the road at St. Vincent's Orphanage. We were manoeuvred round, marched up and down, and ultimately were marched through St. Teresa's Road, Botanic Road, Iona Road and into the city. The police formed up and marched behind us. We were dismissed in O'Connell Street. For his failure to tackle us in arms that day, Assistant Commissioner Quinn was pensioned off. According to a statement issued in the newspapers at the time he took the line that his job as a policeman was to prevent trouble, not to create it; that as far as he could see the Volunteers were a most respectable, disciplined body of young men. He knew we were armed and if he had attacked there would have been blood shed and lives lost. It was not his job, as a policeman, to force such a calamity and if the Government wished to carry on a war it was the Army's job to do it.

Very shortly after this Oscar Traynor was promoted Vice-Commandant of the 2nd Battalion, and Pat Sweeney became O/C., "F" Company, with Seán Ward as 1st Lieutenant. I cannot remember who the 2nd Lieutenant was.

During the year 1917 and 1918 several raids had been made by police on Clonliffe Hall, but the Volunteers always escaped,

usually by using the rope from the window and spreading out across the grounds of Clonliffe College. Finally one night - I think it was 29th January, 1919 -when "B" Company was on parade under the command of Paddy Daly, the police surrounded the hall and grounds and captured a number of Volunteers. They were charged, refused to recognise the Court, and were sentenced to terms of imprisonment. An official Closing Order was made on Clonliffe Hall and we had to abandon its use. Parades were transferred to 42 North Great Georges Street.

Early in 1919 the 5th Battalion (Engineers) under Commandant Liam Archer was formed, to which most of the tradesmen in the various Companies were transferred.

About February or March 1919, I was promoted Battalion Adjutant. About this period, I think, we organised raids for arms on civilian houses and practically every gun of any sort in the Battalion area came under our control. "G" men (Police detectives) who were becoming very officious, were warned that they were regarded as spies and, if they did not cease from their activities, would be dealt with as such. This operation was done on an organised plan and, in every case, at least four men were put into the position that they could definitely identify each "G" man. Those of them who did not desist were again warned and those who continued to act after that were man-handled. Following this when they persisted they were shot.

We did a great deal of organising work at this time, organising auxiliary services, such as, signalling, first-aid etc., and picked men were specially trained in these services. A Cyclist Company, known as "A" Company, was formed in the 2nd Battalion. We set up private Post Offices in various shops ,and

houses in the Battalion area at which despatches could be left and collected.

During 1919 we took the Oath of Allegiance to Dáil Éireann, which, following the General Election of December 1918, had met and was now functioning. The Volunteers now became the Irish Republican Army.

About this time also we had trouble with some of our men who thought we were moving too slowly and who wanted to attack the military rather than the police. Headquarters were not ready for this move at the time. We pointed out to our objectors that only a disciplined organisation could achieve results; urged them to use the time they had to perfect themselves as soldiers; and that they would, before long, get plenty of opportunities to meet the British Army.

At this time the Brigade Adjutant was Jack Shouldice.

1st	Battalion,	Adjutant,	Liam O'Carroll.
2nd	"	"	myself.
3rd	"	"	- Ledwidge, and subsequently Joe Guilfoyle.
4th	"	"	Seán Dowling and later Jack O'Shaughnessy.
5th	"	"	Liam O'Doherty.

On 19th December, 1919, several members of the Battalion took part in the attack on Lord French, at Ashtown, in which Martin Savage, a member of the Battalion who had been very active as Assistant Battalion Quartermaster, was killed.

Early in 1920, one could feel the spirit of the Volunteers strengthening. Men were most punctilious in their attendance

at parades and manoeuvres. Steps were taken to perfect our organisation in every possible way. Every Company in the area listed people who had motor cars and had them marked "friendly" or "hostile". Lists of friendly doctors were also compiled, and arrangements made with them to deal with any cases of casualties that might arise. Somewhere about this time a few cars were seized from the Army and Navy Canteen Garage and, after the seizure, I remember we were in a fix to find a garage for one. Fortunately, I knew of a large shed in the grounds at Charlemount House, Marino, which was not in use at the moment. At that time the grounds of Charlemount House were used by allotment holders to help the drive for food. We formally applied to the Corporation, using fictitious names, for the use of the shed for storing tools for allotment holders. The car was only two nights in the shed when I was raided at my home in Charlemount House - a flat to which I had only removed a few weeks before. There was a hole in the side of the shed which we had not yet repaired. The number of the car could be read through this hole and I was sure it would be discovered. Yet it escaped.

The raid on myself was made by military accompanied by a civilian who, at that time, was commonly called the "mystery man". Nothing was found, although my gun and the Battalion papers were there. I was rather amazed at this raid considering I had been only a few weeks in Charlemount House and had not notified change of address to anybody. As far as I was aware only my immediate relatives and a few intimate fellow Volunteer officers, all of whom I could trust implicitly, knew my new address. The military officer in charge of the raiding party did mention, when leaving, that if some of my neighbours were not so fond of writing letters

he would not be there.

Early in this year also an attempt was made by men of the 2nd Battalion to hold up a train,carrying British military and munitions, at Newcomen Bridge. The information about it was only received a very short time before the train was due and arrangements were very rushed. It failed because one man opened fire prematurely. It was the first attempt at a big military operation in the 2nd Battalion.

Curfew was first imposed early this year. We believed it would hamper us very severely, but, to our surprise, our revised plans immediately overcame its disadvantages. It was utilised very much by the enemy for raids and arrests. Our Intelligence Service at this time was receiving particular attention and every effort was made to make it as efficient as possible. Every Company had its Intelligence Officer known as Company I.O., who had specially selected assistants. Company I.Os. met regularly with the Battalion Intelligence Officer, to whom reports were sent, and who investigated them further if necessary. They then gravitated to the Brigade Intelligence Officer. Some very important information was obtained through this system, some of which originated in a casual remark dropped by some civilian. About this time also the raids on the mails were started. This developed during 1920 and 1921 so strongly that the enemy were never sure that any of their letters would get through without interference from the I.R.A. At one time a staff was kept going censoring these mails and reposting them, if passed, stamped "censored by I.R.A.".

At Easter 1920, Income Tax Offices in Dublin and, I think, all over the country, were raided and all papers burned. This, I understand, interfered very severely with the enemy's collection of income tax.

About this time also there was a big hunger strike amongst I.R.A. prisoners in Mountjoy and a general strike was called by the Trades Union Congress for their release on 12th April. All Dublin stayed out of work for two days when the prisoners were released.

On 9th May, Frank Gleeson, who was a member of "F" Company, 2nd Battalion, died on hunger strike in Mountjoy. There was a huge parade of Volunteers at his funeral, and several high-ranking Volunteers from all over the country, amongst them, Terry McSwiney, attended. The strength of the parade and the amount of public sympathy seemed to have an effect on the enemy. If my memory serves me I think the Volunteer demands for treatment as prisoners-of-war were conceded.

About this time also the railwaymen began their refusal to carry munitions or military in uniform and Railwaymen were being dismissed every day.

In July a raid was made by members of the 2nd Battalion, under the command of Oscar Traynor, on the Rotunda Rink, which was the General Sorting Office of the Post Office at that period. The Castle mails were now, at every stage, guarded by military, but it was discovered that there was a gap of about two minutes when the mails were left unguarded at 8 a.m.. I did not take part personally in this raid, but I know that the officers in charge met by appointment that morning at 7 a.m. at the Ballast Office to

synchronise their watches. This was necessary as accuracy of time was of the essence of the operation and the Rink was being entered from both sides. Oscar has told me that when he entered the building he had no knowledge of the "chute" which was used for sending down the bags of mail. He immediately saw that it would save time to use the "chute" and gave orders to his men to follow him, he being the first man to go down. I consider this a good example of Traynor's initiative. The raid was completely successful, the Castle mails being seized and got away safely. It is interesting also, as showing Oscar's wonderful attention to detail, that he had directed Seán Russell, who was his next in command, that morning, to bring a bicycle and towel. When the raid was completed they took their bicycles and he told Seán, who did not know what the towel was for, to throw the towel round his shoulders. They were going for a dip.

The complete success of this raid, in broad daylight, in very limited time, in the presence of Post Office officials, without the firing of a single shot or the capture of a single Volunteer, caught the public imagination. The Castle had thought its new scheme for protection of its mails watertight and foolproof. This raid showed that the Volunteers had men of initiative, courage and discipline who could make their precautions look childish.

A Police Force composed of men drawn from the ranks of the I.R.A. was formed. It did very useful work and was a potent factor in keeping evil-doers from taking advantage of the troubled times.

Somewhere about August the Auxiliaries first appeared in Dublin, I think. The first time I saw them in force was when they cordoned off Dame Street while they were raiding the Munster & Leinster Bank for the Dáil Éireann Loan Funds. There is no doubt

their appearance was rather terrifying to our people. Each of them carried a rifle, revolver and a parabellum, and they had unlimited transport. They swaggered and bullied and appeared utterly reckless. They were all ex-officers of the British Army and had to have served at least six months active service at the Front in the Great War just ended. When one remembers that each of our Volunteers going into action had a revolver of any calibre and maybe six rounds of ammunition one does not wonder that, for a while, some of our people were rather downcast.

Around this time it was arranged that, as rifles could not be used often in Dublin, they should be transferred to the country districts where they were badly needed. In the 2nd Battalion we gathered together about 130 rifles. They were all assembled into the Railwaymen's Hall in Oriel Street off Seville Place. A small lorry was engaged to take them away and, just as we had finished loading the lorry, our scout at the corner reported Auxiliaries approaching. We just covered the rifles with a tarpaulin and took positions, with drawn revolvers, around the front of the hall. The entrance to the Railwaymen's Hall is only about twenty yards from Seville Place corner. The Auxiliaries approached, just looked down the street and passed on. We got the lorry away immediately without interference.

At this time the railway position was becoming serious and the Dublin Corporation decided to appoint a committee to take over arrangements for the transport of food to the city, and goods from it, in case the railways broke down. I always thought that this part of the business was gravely mismanaged. When the committee was being appointed, as published in the Press, William O'Brien, the Labour Leader, moved that two representatives of the Army be

included in the committee. Some Unionist member, I think it was Alderman Quaid, asked did he mean the British Army, and O'Brien replied he had in mind the Irish Army. About a fortnight later it was announced in the papers that Richard Mulcahy and Richard McKee had been co-opted on this committee. A few days afterwards a meeting, mainly of Dublin Corporation officials, was held in a Corporation Office in Exchange Buildings, Lord Edward Street. Dick McKee attended at this meeting and took charge. I had seen this meeting assemble and I was not at all impressed by the majority of the people who attended it. Some of them I knew to be hostile.

When leaving this meeting Dick nodded across to me and, after proceeding a few yards, came back and called me and gave me some directions. Immediately he went I was surrounded on all sides by people wanting to know who he was and what authority he had. I, of course, refused to say anything, but that evening I went to Brigade Headquarters at the Typographical Union Office in Lower Gardiner Street, and waited from 5.15 p.m. to 7.30 p.m. for Dick McKee to urge on him to have nothing more to do with this committee as I seriously believed that it would lead to his capture. I told him also I knew a number of those people who had been at the meeting and pointed out to him that I did not think that this committee would ever be able to function efficiently; that if the railways broke down the Volunteers would have to step in and do the job. I pointed out to him his position in the Brigade and what his loss would mean to us and beseeched him to withdraw. He took the line that somebody had to do the job and that, if the worst came to the worst, there were several other good men to follow. He attended at a few more meetings of the Committee, one on the very day and at the time when the British

seized the Municipal Buildings across the street and I had to wait for him at the door and turn him back. Whether I am correct or not I always have had the feeling that it was his attendance at that committee that led to Dick McKee being spotted and ultimately captured and murdered. So strongly did I feel this that on the night of his death I went specially to the Vice-O/C. Brigade, Oscar Traynor, to appeal to him not to have anything to do with it and told him the preceding facts. He assured me he would not and never did. I never knew the Committee to meet again. I think it collapsed with the death of Dick McKee.

On that same visit to Oscar I asked for directions on another matter that was worrying me at the time. Some months previously the Battalion Adjutants had received instructions to make up complete lists of all members of their battalions, showing their names, addresses, age and occupation; and make out in code what arms, ammunition and equipment each had. We were never informed what was the object of the lists. They were gathered in at a meeting of the Battalion Adjutants and, due to some breakdown, I found myself in possession of complete lists of four of the five Battalions in Dublin. While I took all the care of them I possibly could I was extremely nervous that they might be discovered. As I have said I asked Oscar for directions about them. He did not know anything about the matter and naturally asked me for what reason they were compiled. I could not tell him. He then instructed me to go home and burn them. Years later I was informed by Leo Henderson who, I think, was Brigade Adjutant at the time the instruction to prepare the list was issued, that the object was as follows.

Dick McKee, as Brigadier, used to receive from one of our Intelligence agents every night a list of people who were to be raided that night. He generally would not receive this list till nearly 9.30 with curfew at 10 o'clock. He used usually get on his bicycle and proceed to warn these people, as far as possible. He found that he was often going after people who had no connection with the Movement while Volunteers were not able to be warned. His idea was to prepare cards from these lists which would be filed in the Mater Hospital where Dick had entrance at all times. The first part of the sheets, i.e. name, address, age and occupation, were to be filled in on one card, and the other part in code on another card in a different place, the connecting link being the number. He intended when he received those lists to run through the cards, pick out those who were recorded as Volunteers and make sure that these were warned in time.

About September, Peadar Clancy became Director of Munitions, G.H.Q. He was succeeded as Vice-Brigadier by Oscar Traynor. Traynor's time, until the death of Dick McKee, was mainly taken up in organising the special services of the Brigade to the highest possible pitch. Shortly afterwards Frank Henderson, Battalion O/C., was transferred to the Organisation Department of G.H.Q. Seań Russell, who had been O/C. "E" Company, became O/C., Battalion. Charlie Saurin had become Brigade Adjutant.

For a few weeks nothing of particular note happened in the Battalion area. We on the Battalion staff became rather

concerned about the effect of this inactivity on the morale of the men, particularly as the Auxiliaries were now so much in evidence everywhere and we seemed to have withdrawn completely from the fight. We agreed that some action would have to be taken to counteract this influence. It was decided that action should be taken against the armed touts who were now roaming the streets and working in conjunction with the Auxiliaries. These men, mostly ex-British soldiers, were very much in evidence on the streets of Dublin and were reporting any suspicious movement of our people which they noticed. They were known to be armed and we had to expect they would take part against us in any activities which we might carry out. We prepared a plan under which, on a certain night, all the streets in the 2nd Battalion area in which these touts ordinarily moved would be patrolled by sections of our men. Any suspicious characters would be held up and searched and if found armed, shot. Of course, arrangements were also to be made to ensure that no Volunteers from other Battalions would be carrying arms in our area for any purpose on that night. Carrying out routine orders we submitted the plan to Headquarters for sanction and were informed that sanction was withheld as it would interfere with something bigger. Later we knew that this referred to 'Bloody Sunday'.

About a week before 'Bloody Sunday' we got our instructions and a list of the addresses at which the 2nd Battalion were to operate. Only one of them - the Gresham Hotel - was in our area; the others were all in the 3rd Battalion area on the south side of the Liffey. Immediately we saw that our men might have

great difficulty in getting back to their base after their operation was complete, as we naturally expected that the bridges across the Liffey would be held immediately. It was, therefore, decided that our men on operations in the 3rd Battalion area would meet on the North Wall, ferry boats would be commandeered and our men taken across by that means, the ferries to be held in readiness for their return. The instructions were that the operation was to commence at 9 a.m. on the following Sunday, 21st November, and must be completed by 9.10 at latest. Each Company officer was given the address where he was to operate with instructions to reconnoitre it completely during the week. Eight men were to take part in each operation and were to be selected very carefully by the officer in charge. It was arranged that these squads of eight men would report on the Saturday night at 100, Seville Place at quarter-hour intervals for final instructions. It was also arranged that the orders to the rest of our men to act as stewards at Croke Park on the following Sunday would be issued as usual but that they would be countermanded on Sunday morning.

On the Saturday night when I went to 100, Seville Place, I was stopped at the corner of the North Strand and Seville Place by a Volunteer from "E" Company, I think, who informed me that the Auxiliaries had raided and taken possession of 100, Seville Place. On looking down I saw the lorries outside. He told me that the I.R.A. Officer in charge had gone down to take a room in Tara Hall, belonging to the Painters' Union, in Gloucester Street (now Seán McDermott Street). I proceeded down there and met the O/C. Battalion. It is a great tribute to our organisation in the 2nd Battalion that each of these batches of eight men found their way

to Tara Hall that night and received their instructions. It is well to place on record that Seán Russell, the O/C., explained to them that the men to be shot were members of a new secret service which the enemy had brought into this country; that many of them had great reputations as secret service men working for England during the recent war; that it was vitally necessary for the success of our fight that they be removed; that no country had scruples about shooting enemy spies in war time; that if any man had moral scruples about going on this operation he was at full liberty to withdraw and no one would think any the worse of him; that he wanted every man to be satisfied in his conscience that he could properly take part in this operation.

As well as my memory serves me, I think the 2nd Battalion had six groups assembled that night and at 9.30 p.m. when we had just completed all arrangements, orders arrived from Dick McKee, the Brigadier, to mobilise two more squads for two additional addresses. Curfew was at 10 o'clock. I always think that it showed the wonderful efficiency of our organisation that a few men who were present immediately undertook to contact certain Volunteer comrades and have them on the job in the morning. Officers were, of course, nominated by the O/C. Every one of those eight operations was carried out as planned. Only at one place did a fight with the enemy develop - Upper Mount Street - in which one of our men, Frank Teeling, a member of "E" Company, 2nd Battalion, was wounded and captured.

Having completed arrangements for the operations on the Sunday, Dick McKee and Peadar Clancy went on that Saturday night to Mr. Fitzpatrick's house in Gloucester Street (now Seán McDermott Street)

to stay. Fitzpatrick was an auctioneer's assistant in Battersby's, Westmoreland Street. Somewhere after midnight the Auxiliaries arrived and knocked hard on the door. Dick, realising that the information he had on him would spoil the operations the next morning, refused to open the door and proceeded to burn all his papers. Ultimately the Auxiliaries broke in the door. They rushed in and when they saw the embers of the fire they tried to save any scraps they could but were unsuccessful. It is quite apparent that, when the operations took place the next morning, they connected Dick and Peadar with them and so set out to torture and ultimately murder them. I had this information years ago from Mr. Fitzpatrick.

On 'Bloody Sunday' we cancelled the mobilisation of the 2nd Battalion men to act as stewards in Croke Park. About 2.30 I happened to have occasion to go to the Battalion O/C., Seán Russell, on the North Strand, about some matter and when I arrived I found Tom Kilcoyne, O/C., "B" Company, already there. Seán came out immediately and said, "You come on too, Harry, I'll tell you what it's about on the way". The three of us proceeded down Spring Garden Street and he told me that Tom Kilcoyne had brought word that the Auxiliaries and military were already mobilised and under orders to proceed to Croke Park to mow down the people. The information, it seems, had come from a Sergeant of the D.M.P. who, while not in any way in sympathy with us, had been so horrified when he discovered what was about to happen, that he thought it his duty to get word to us to see if the calamity could be avoided. He had only some slight inkling that Tom Kilcoyne was somehow associated with the I.R.A. and, as he lived near Kilcoyne, he went at once and passed on the information.

We went to the main entrance at Jones' Road and there saw Mr. L. O'Toole and Jack Shouldice (a former Dublin Brigade Adjutant) - both officers of the G.A.A. Seán Russell, introducing himself as Battalion O/C. for the area, told them the information we had received, stated that he believed it was correct and would be acted on. He appealed to those officials to close the gates and stop any more people from entering Croke Park. He pointed out what an appalling thing it would be if the enemy opened fire with machine guns on that crowd. The two officials pointed out the difficulty of getting the people out now, that they would probably demand their money back, and that if an announcement was publicly made it might lead to panic and death in another form. They wanted to consult Dan McCarthy who was, they said, out in the grounds. They pointed out, also, that the match that day was a benefit match for one of the men of the 2nd Battalion who had been badly injured a few months previously, while acting as a steward for the G.A.A., in a fracas with some betting men and touts. We said that could not be helped, that the match would have to be held at some later date. We left them on the understanding that no further admissions to the grounds would be allowed and that they would do their best to get the people out. When we came out I reminded Seán that the G.A.A. were that day without the help of any stewards, as our men had been withdrawn, and suggested that we should ourselves try and help them to turn the people away. We had proceeded some distance by this time and we went to the gate at St. James' Avenue. We told the man on the stile there the arrangement we had made, and that he would be receiving orders not to allow any more people into the grounds. He stopped letting them

through at our request. After some little time he got impatient and went off to verify our statement. A big crowd had now collected in James' Avenue and were getting very impatient as the match was due to start. The next thing we heard was the match starting and immediately the man on the turnstile came back, swearing at us, and proceeded to let the crowd in. As we could do nothing further we withdrew. We proceeded across the waste ground then known as 'Friends Field' and down Clonliffe Avenue to Ballybough Road where I parted with Seán Russell and Tom Kilcoyne, the whole three of us very downhearted.

I went to my mother's house on Clonliffe Road for dinner and was only barely seated when the firing started. I was so upset and restless that I could not eat any dinner, and on going to the front of the house to reconnoitre found that I was within the cordon. After some time the firing ceased and some time later the cordon was withdrawn. I saw a number of people proceeding down Clonliffe Road from the match that day who appeared to be wounded; several were bleeding and others appeared to be hurt in other ways. Amongst them I saw Tom Keogh, a member of G.H.Q. Squad who had been on the operation that morning and who had been wounded in the arm in Croke Park. I took him into my mother's house and got my sister Gertie (now Mrs. Murphy), who was a member of Cumann na mBan, to give him first aid. A dead man was found only a few yards from my back gate.

The enemy drew a cordon round Croke Park, through the streets adjacent to it, and opened fire with machine guns from the lorries. I understand that one lorry was halted on the

canal bridge at Jones' Road, where it commanded a very full view of the Croke Park arena, and from there a machine gun was played on the people in Croke Park.

About 3 o'clock on Monday, 22nd November, I got word of the murder of Dick McKee and Peadar Clancy. I was very upset by the news. It seemed to me a confirmation of my theory that Dick's association with the Committee to deal with the railway difficulties would lead to his apprehension. I made up my mind then to see the Vice-Brigadier, Oscar Traynor, at once and appeal to him to have nothing to do with that Committee, as I have already recorded.

Oscar Traynor immediately took over charge of the Dublin Brigade but insisted with Headquarters, who wanted to appoint him, that he should be elected, stating that he would, of course, carry on till such election. He was duly elected unanimously, if I remember correctly, within a couple of weeks.

During the week following 'Bloody Sunday' there was a record number of raids and arrests in Dublin. Towards the end of that week, or the beginning of the next, I got word that Charlie Saurin, Brigade Adjutant, had been arrested. Within ten minutes after getting this word I met Oscar Traynor who asked me to come to the Brigade and carry on as Adjutant until he could fix up the position permanently. He stated that as I had the 2nd Battalion well organised, and had a good assistant in Andy Doyle, the change could take place without any interruption in organisation. I went to Seán Russell to report this and he ordered me to hand over all my papers to Andy Doyle as I would not be coming back. On my questioning this procedure he informed me that it had already been arranged that I was to go to the Brigade as Adjutant. Andy Doyle became Adjutant of the 2nd Battalion.

When I reported that night to Brigade Headquarters, at the Typographical Union Offices, Lower Gardiner Street, Oscar and I found ourselves rather at sea. The only available member of the original Brigade staff was McGurk, Quartermaster, and we found it difficult to contact him. I think it took us nearly a week to get in touch with him. We set out immediately to put the organisation of the Brigade on a footing that would be capable of carrying on in all foreseeable circumstances. One of the first steps we took was to get in touch with representatives of other military organisations. We contacted and interviewed J. O'Neill of the Irish Citizen Army, - Scollen of the Hibernian Rifles, Liam Langley of Fianna Éireann, and a representative of Cumann na mBan. Our object was to secure the use of any arms or equipment that these organisations might be in possession of, and also, if possible, to link up with the I.R.A. any active members they might still have. We explained our ideas and laid the foundation of very active co-operation with the Fianna and Cumann na mBan which worked effectively during the ensuing months.

Within a short period transfers of lads with some military training was taking place regularly from the Fianna to Volunteer ranks. The Cumann na mBan organised hospitals for wounded men, and looked after the removal of such from place to place as necessary.

The first Brigade Council at which I attended took place the following Sunday morning. There was a long discussion about the delay of the 3rd Battalion in carrying out an attack on the Auxiliaries at Ballsbridge Post Office where they called regularly to collect the mails for Beggars Bush Barracks, which was their Headquarters. It appears that this attack had been ordered by the Brigade some weeks earlier but had not yet taken place. It was

ordered that this operation should be carried out immediately, as from now on we were going to wage war on all enemy forces to the very best of our ability. This operation was carried out on 14th December and was a success. It was the first direct attack on the Auxiliary Division by a Unit of the Dublin Brigade; the reaction of the Auxiliaries, when attacked, and the success of the operation ended forever the spell the reputed military prowess of the Auxiliaries had created. They broke for cover as soon as the attack opened and lost a crossley tender and their mails in the encounter. The newspapers gave a glowing account of the fight and the warlike prestige of the Auxiliaries collapsed in the minds of both the I.R.A. and the public. Never again had the 3rd Battalion to be reprimanded for delay in attacking - the difficulty now was to restrain them,

The month of December passed in a fever of organisation and, by the end of it, we had succeeded so well that we were able to start the Active Service Unit of the Dublin Brigade on the 1st January, 1921.

This Active Service Unit was the first paid unit in the Irish Volunteers; each of its fifty members, officers and men, received £4. 10s. per week. Twelve men were selected from each of the four Battalions (the Engineer Battalion being omitted) and two Officers. Each man was selected only on the ground that he had already proved that he would make a good soldier. Most of the men were taken from their ordinary employment. The men from each Battalion formed a separate section, and each section fought in its own Battalion area unless the whole Active Service Unit had to be brought together for a special operation. Their Barracks was in

Temple Bar, and later in Great Strand Street. The O/C. of the Active Service Unit was Paddy Flanagan of the 3rd Battalion; the Adjutant was Seamus Gibbons of the 4th Battalion.

The first ambush of the Active Service Unit took place at Bachelor's Walk, near the Metal Bridge, on the 11th January, about 3 p.m. This was the first day ambush in which bombs were used by the I.R.A. in Dublin. From that on every Battalion became active in its own particular area. Each Battalion O/C reported at Brigade Headquarters about 7 o'clock every evening and received any reports or information that was available at Brigade Headquarters. It was part of my duty to report every day at 2 o'clock, for a like purpose, to the Adjutant-General, Gearóid O'Sullivan, who then had his Headquarters at 30 Lower Ormond Quay. Enemy activity increased also and this very increase provided more opportunities for our men. Apart from actual fighting it became a regular feature of our activities to hold up and capture food supplies for the military and Auxiliaries. These, we generally passed on to some of the hospitals.

Seán Russell had now become Director of Munitions in place of Peadar Clancy and Tom Ennis had become O/C of the 2nd Battalion. About January, 1921, Paddy Holohan became O/C., 1st Battalion, in place of Tom Byrne, and Seán Dowling, Adjutant of the 4th Battalion, became O/C., 4th Battalion in lieu of Dr. Ted. Kelly. Jack O'Shaughnessy succeeded Seán Dowling as Battalion Adjutant. Seán Mooney was appointed Vice-O/C., Brigade. About this time also enemy foot patrols on the streets every night became a feature.

Somewhere in January, the O/C. Brigade, received word from Paddy Daly, who was a prisoner in Mountjoy, that Frank Teeling was in the hospital in Mountjoy, and suggested that we should get him out.

After inspecting the defences at Mountjoy it was decided that our only hope was to breach the wall on the canal near the hospital, with explosives, and raid the hospital for him, but we had no explosives whatsoever in the Brigade. Enquiries elicited that the Irish Citizen Army had some and O'Neill, the O/C. of the I.C.A., promised to get it for us. We arranged to buy it but when the stuff was examined it was found to be liquid and useless. While searching high and low for more we received a further letter from Paddy Daly, in which he upbraided us, and the whole Brigade, very strongly for our dilatoriness and told us that Teeling had been moved to Kilmainham.

Immediately we set out to try and arrange Teeling's escape from Kilmainham. I am sure Oscar Traynor has given the full details of this operation in his record and no man knows them better. I know he was the man who himself interviewed, on several occasions, the two British soldiers who helped in the escape. He usually met them at Jim Kirwan's public-house in Parnell Street. There appears to be some doubt as to the person who first contacted these soldiers. The first to approach me about them was Paddy Kennedy of G.H.Q. Intelligence and, at the time, I had no knowledge of anybody else being in touch with them. I passed Kennedy on to O/C., Brigade - Oscar Traynor. However, I know that Oscar Traynor's recollection is that the late Herbert Conroy of "E" Company, 2nd Battalion, was the first man to make contact. As a result of the O/C's interview with them it was decided that an attempt would be made to get Teeling over the wall by rope ladder. We opened communications with Kilmainham and arrangements were made. At this stage the Chief of Staff, Dick Mulcahy, sent word that he wanted the first man out to be a prisoner called "Stewart". We had never heard of "Stewart", who turned out to be the late Ernie O'Malley, but Oscar took

the line that as Teeling was a Dublin Brigade Volunteer,who was actually under sentence of death, and this being a Dublin Brigade operation, the first man out must be Teeling. He was prepared to give "Stewart" second place. Paddy Moran, O/C., "D" Company, 2nd Battalion, another prisoner there, who had been courtmartialled for taking part in the operations on 'Bloody Sunday' at Mount Street, but had not yet received the result of that courtmartial, was given third place. Moran was convinced that he would be acquitted as he had produced such an abundance of evidence to show that he was not at Mount Street. Simon Donnelly, Vice O/C., 3rd Battalion, also in Kilmainham at this time, was placed fourth on the list.

The escape by rope ladder failed. At the moment my memory is hazy as to the reason.

Exploring further the possibilities of escape it was learned that there was a gate,to which the prisoners could get access, from a yard at Kilmainham which led to a laneway on the west side of the Jail. This gate was secured by a heavy bolt but, if that bolt could be cut, the escape could be carried out with the connivance of the two soldiers who were already working with us. It was then I first heard of a tool called a bolt-cutters. The first tool we got, in reply to our enquiries, was only a small instrument like a hedge shears which was useless for the purpose. The actual bolt-cutters was got by Mick Smith of "E" Company, 2nd Battalion, in, I understand, a Sunday morning raid on Ross & Walpoles, an engineering firm in the North Wall. It was very effective, but the difficulty was to smuggle it into the Jail owing to the length of the handles; without the length in the handles there was not sufficient leverage to make the bolt-cutters work

efficiently. This difficulty was got over by cutting the handles and placing over the cut end of each handle a socket which enabled it to be fitted to the other cut end leaving the leverage of the bolt-cutters intact.

A couple of these bolt-cutters, in parts, as described, together with a few revolvers and ammunition, were smuggled into Kilmainham by the two British soldiers. Everything seemed now all ready for the escape but, due to internal difficulties, it did not actually take place till some days later. During those days several members of "F" Company, 4th Battalion, under Christy Byrne and Jim Donnelly, were on duty all day outside the Jail for the purpose of dealing with any developments that might arise.

As it happened, when Teeling, O'Malley and Donnelly did escape, they passed through without incident or recognition, and the first intimation we in the Brigade had was a note which arrived from Simon Donnelly telling us that they had escaped twenty minutes ago. A few minutes later a note, to the same effect, arrived from O/C., 3rd Battalion. Paddy Moran, unfortunately, refused to come out as he argued that it would put him "on the run",and, in that position, he would not be of anything like the same effectiveness to the organisation. He was executed in March. There was great jubilation amongst us that night at the success of our efforts and the efficiency of the Brigade.

In the latter part of January the No. 2. Section of the Active Service Unit attacked an Auxiliary patrol near Clonturk Park, Drumcondra. They had actually been sent to carry out the ambush at Binn's Bridge, but for some reason of their own, when they reached the position, moved up beyond Tolka Bridge to Clonturk Park. It was a rather disastrous change of plan as the enemy succeeded in capturing Frank Flood, who was in charge and who was wounded in

this ambush; also Tommy Brien, Bernard Ryan and Paddy Doyle, all of whom were executed on the 14th March following. Michael Magee was killed in the fight. Tommy Brien had been Brigade orderly for some time and had appealed to be allowed to go on this ambush. Actually I took some of his despatches the night before, to have delivered for him early the next morning to enable him to take part in this ambush. He had a friend named Seán Burke, who was also in the ambush and who, to my mind, showed wonderful initiative, courage and composure and thereby escaped. As he told me the story, it seems that when Magee fell he tried to pull Magee towards the shelter of the back walls of some houses. They opened fire on him with machine guns and, realising that Magee was dead, he dropped him and ran for shelter. He found an open back gate, went into the house and found nobody in residence but a very old man and a maid. The old man was very frightened, but Burke gave him instructions that if anybody came making enquiries he was to say that Burke was his son and that he had not left the house that morning; and that if he could not say that to keep absolutely silent. He had hardly completed this instruction when the rallying on the door started. He took the spectacles off the old man and put them on himself, hung his hat on a rack, looked around for a place to hide his gun and could see nothing better than the empty fireplace which had a paper festoon in it. He just lifted the paper, put his gun under it, and then opened the door. He was menaced immediately by three or four revolvers, covered and threatened. He had taken care to get the name of the people in the house. He gave that name and said he was a son of the old man. The Auxiliaries seemed very doubtful and stated that a man who had been in the fight had entered the back door of this house -

one of them had seen him enter it. "Alright", they said, "we'll search the house, but you go first, and if anything happens like what happened in the vicinity recently you are for it". Apparently they were referring to the fight by Dan Breen and Seán Treacy in Professor Carolan's house, which was only a short distance away. Burke told me that when they went upstairs and reached the first door they said to him, "What's this room?" He had not the foggiest idea; He chanced saying, "It's a bedroom". At the other rooms he tried to get the door open a little bit to have a glance in first. In one, where he was barely in time, he just saw the edge of the bath and said, "Bathroom". When he had gone the rounds of the house they took him down, held him in the hall while they questioned the old man and the maid-servant. The old man was so frightened that he simply could not say anything but the girl backed up his story in great style. They then took him outside to Clonturk Park, put him up against the back wall of the house and threatened to shoot him, and then searched him all over again very minutely. They brought other Auxiliaries along who said that he was extremely like the man that was in the fight. After about an hour's interrogation, and all sorts of threats, they brought him back into the house and ordered him not to leave it for some hours.

In the meantime another party of them had been questioning the servant very severely but she stuck to her story through it all. As soon as they were satisfied that the Auxiliaries had left, though they believed that the house would still be watched, she took him upstairs and rigged him out in other clothes. He was worried about his gun, not wanting to leave it there and not wanting to carry it, under existing circumstances, but she said she

would look after it. She then made an appointment to meet Burke at a certain point that evening with the gun. He went out through the front door, hopped on the tram into town, and got through safely. When he arrived home he found that there was a bullet stuck in the welt of his shoe above the heel which had escaped both himself and the Auxiliaries in all their search. The maid kept her appointment with Burke and returned his gun.

Seán Burke reported to Brigade Headquarters that evening and gave the Brigade O/C. and myself a report of the fight that morning, and then told the story of his escape as related above. He then requested to be given the job of Brigade Orderly in lieu of his old friend Tommy Brien whom he felt, rightly, he would never see again. He carried on as Brigade Orderly, with occasional times off to take part in ambushes, until the Truce. He had some incredible escapes from capture while carrying our despatches - being held up and thoroughly searched several times. He always succeeded in getting away with the despatches intact.

For a long time we had been using a room in the premises of the Typographical Union, Lower Gardiner Street, as Brigade Headquarters. Unfortunately, we had no way of concealing papers there with the result that I had to carry the Brigade papers through the city at all times of the day and evening. The enemy, at this time, seemed to be relying a lot on military foot patrols. These patrols used to hold up, and search thoroughly, all pedestrians, cyclists and cars that happened to come their way. Many were arrested and often tortured. Some were found shot in outlying places.

One evening I was working late in the Dublin Corporation and was due at Brigade Headquarters at 7 o'clock. I left the

Corporation Office in Parliament Street about 6.50 p.m. and immediately saw a patrol of soldiers moving towards Grattan Bridge. I drew back to let them proceed and, if possible, find the direction in which they were moving. After a few minutes I got on my bicycle and went over the bridge. I could see well up Capel Street but not well along the Quays, where the lighting was bad, and there was no sign whatever of the patrol. I decided to go up Capel Street and had just got beyond Baxendales when I was thrown off the bicycle. I looked up and found a British soldier with a rifle standing over me. I got up, he still not saying anything, and I was just thinking of trying to make a dash for it when he said, "The officer wants you". I said, "Where is he?" He said, "Over here". Looking over I saw a few military at the corner of Little Strand Street and that I was covered by three rifles. I went over with the soldier and found the officer and patrol lined up in the dark in Little Strand Street. The first question the officer asked me was why did I not halt when called upon. I said I did not hear him as I was a little deaf. He then began to question and search me. I had, as usual, a bundle of Brigade papers in an envelope down my right sleeve; I held on to my bicycle with that arm. He proceeded to go through my pockets very very carefully. From information we had received previously in other cases we had decided to always have some papers in our pockets as we had learned that the enemy were very suspicious of empty pockets. Accordingly, I had an amount of rubbish, such as out-of-date tickets for drawing of prizes, in my pocket book. He went very particularly through all these and seemed to be annoyed at the result. I had about sixty-five pounds of Brigade cash in my pocket, being under orders always to keep a minimum amount of sixty pounds in cash for emergencies. I had, of course, a tale ready for that but he

just asked me "Is this your cash?", and passed on. The next thing he produced, however, gave me a terrific shock. I collected the pay for the Active Service Unit from the Adjutant-General every Thursday, on my daily visit, for payment to the men on Fridays. It had always been paid to me in cash. On this day, however, the Adjutant-General had told me he had forgotten to get the cash and bound me to secrecy about the name on the cheque and the Bank at which the account was kept. He gave me the cheque and told me to go and cash it immediately. On leaving him, on my way down the stairs, I met the Chief of Staff, Dick Mulcahy, who asked me some questions about a preliminary report of some ambush that I had sent him the previous night. He brought me back to the Adjutant-General's office and kept me half an hour. By the time I left I had a very large number of things to see to, all urgent, with the result that the cheque temporarily escaped my memory. I proceeded up Parnell Street and Summerhill and at Melinn's shop I suddenly thought of the cheque which was on the Rotunda Branch of the National Bank in Parnell Street. I wheeled on the bicycle to go back to the Bank but when I looked at my watch I found I was five minutes late. I said to myself, "Sure I won't want the money till morning at any rate", and with the rush of other affairs forgot about it until it was produced in the search. My heart fell to my boots, and my mind worked like lightning as to what I would say, as I was very sure that I would be questioned in detail about a cheque for £225, uncrossed, and made out to bearer. To my heartfelt surprise the officer just looked at the cheque, folded it up, put it back and never asked me a question. I really thought, when the cheque had appeared, that I would be found a roadside corpse the next morning.

He proceeded with the search most minutely and I was just wondering when he would find the Brigade papers. After about twenty or twenty-five minutes a man wearing the suit commonly worn by British Army demobilised soldiers, came and stood on the corner. The officer turned his eyes and saw this man and said in a soft voice "Move on". The man did not hear him. He said again in the same soft voice "Move on". The man started to look round as if he had heard something but did not know what was said. The officer then repeated in the same soft voice "Move on", and before the man could have acted on the order he said in a loud voice, "Corporal, arrest that man". They took the man down Little Strand Street behind the section of soldiers. The officer continued to search me for another five minutes but his nerves seemed to be shaky and jumpy and he was muttering and mumbling something that I could not catch. He then shoved a lot of my stuff back at me loosely and went down Little Strand Street. I put the papers away in my pockets and said to the Sergeant, "I suppose I may skidaddle now". He said nothing so I moved over to the path. I was just settling my coat under me on the bicycle, to avoid trouble if anything happened, as nobody had actually given me permission to go, when a young lady came running over from a crowd of about forty onlookers that had gathered at Baxendales corner and said to me, "Hurry away, Mr., he is after murdering the other man, hopped his head off the ground." I said nothing but I was wondering what would have happened to me if he had discovered what I was carrying.

I went up Abbey Street and was only at the junction of Liffey Street when I saw another patrol crossing the top of Middle Abbey Street in O'Connell Street. I waited a few minutes and

then proceeded up Middle Abbey Street to about where the "Irish Independent" Office is. These buildings were at that time all in course of erection. About that spot I saw another patrol crossing the top and after again waiting a few minutes I again attempted to leave but found a further patrol. I then realised that there was something new afoot that night, so as soon as I thought that the end of this particular patrol had passed I made a dash across O'Connell Street, and found that the tail of the last patrol was only at Lemon's while the head of a new patrol was at Eason's. I managed to get through but arrived in Headquarters at about 8.10 p.m. instead of 7 p.m. and found all the Battalion Commandants waiting. The Brigade O/C. met me with "What kept you?" I told him I had been held up. This, of course, was only an incident by this time and he said, "Give us the papers at any rate". I gave him the papers and proceeded to take off my hat and coat. While I was hanging up my coat he called across the room, "Harry, did you say you were held up?" "I was" I said, "and lucky I am to get here at all because there's some new system of patrols working in the streets tonight. I think you should let me explain to the Commandants what I have found because it would be well to warn their men if they can get in touch with them." I then reported my hold-up and search and my experience of the patrols. The O/C., who had been going through my papers, said to me, "Did you know what you had on you?" "Some of it" I said; "more of it I have only received this evening and have had neither the time nor the opportunity to read them". "Listen,boys", he said, "this is what is on the top of his file"; and he proceeded to read out a letter from Michael Collins giving a full description

of Hardy, Woods and King, three most prominent officers of the Auxiliary Division, with instructions that they be identified and shot at sight. When he read the description I said to him, "Read that description of King again". He did so. I said, "It describes exactly the officer who held me up tonight except that he was in military uniform".

A discussion then arose as to whether Auxiliaries ever went in ordinary military uniform, but we could arrive at no decision. Months later, however, when Seán Forde, who had been our Brigade Intelligence Officer and had been arrested a week or ten days previous to my hold-up, and who was at that time in the Castle under torture, was released, I was telling him about this incident. He told me I was probably correct, as King had tortured him a few times and he knew the man well; and he had actually seen him leaving the Castle in military uniform in charge of a section of military.

Within three-quarters of an hour of my arrival at Brigade Headquarters that night we were getting reports, from all over the Brigade area, about the new system of patrols, under which, if you escaped one, you almost inevitably fell into another. It is, I think, a great tribute to the efficiency and initiative of our men that they had already learned the latest device of the enemy, and, by taking precautions, were out-manoeuvring the British and keeping communications intact.

That night Seán Russell refused to let me carry home the papers remarking that I had been through enough for one day. In some ingenious way of his own he hid them in the newel post

of the banisters on the landing by enlarging what looked like a mouse hole. They could neither be seen nor felt. When I questioned him as to how I was to get them he said he would have them waiting for me the next evening. He had them there for me when I arrived,though, to the present day, I don't know how they were recovered.

About this time our Brigade Headquarters came under definite suspicion by the enemy. We had information that they knew we were in Gardiner Street and the side of the street we were on. Later we had further information that they knew the block of buildings in which our Headquarters was situated, and some days later we had information that they knew we were in one of three adjacent houses. We were seeking elsewhere for a new premises for Brigade Headquarters. At the next Brigade Council it was mentioned that the renovations to the premises at the Plaza Hotel, in Gardiner's Row, recently acquired by the Irish Engineering Union, were practically complete and the premises about to be occupied. It was immediately decided that we should try for premises there and I undertook to see Mick Slater, a 1916 man and one of the founders of that Union, at once. As luck would have it, as soon as the Brigade Council was over we found that Mick Slater was actually waiting to see us on some other matter. We approached him about the premises and told him the position we were in. He informed us that the Irish Engineering Union had not yet used the premises but were holding their first Executive meeting in it the following night. He undertook to arrange that part of the premises would be allotted to us. Actually we went into occupation of them the following night, Mick Slater arranging the details with the Union. We took the premises as a branch of the Irish Clerical Workers' Union of which our Quartermaster, McGurk, was an official.

They were most suitable premises in every way. They were isolated from the rest of the building and had a separate stairs leading to them. These stairs were so placed that they could be easily overlooked in case of a raid. The crowds of members visiting their premises on Union business served as a cloak for our men. They were never discovered by the enemy and continued as Brigade Headquarters up to the taking over of the Four Courts before the Civil War began.

One of the first steps we took in the Plaza was to make a secret hide-out for our papers. Another was to fix a buzzer which could be rung by the caretaker from the hall. The caretaker was Tom Hannigan, another 1916 man, and who, of course, was in our confidence. The push-button of the buzzer was placed in an inconspicuous place in the skirting in the hall, the idea being that, in case of a raid, Hannigan would back towards that spot with his hands up and press the buzzer with his heel. Instructions were given to Tom Hannigan to test out the buzzer some time. Nothing happened for some days and I think we had all forgotten about the instruction until one evening the buzzer sounded and there was a great scurry to hide papers while someone went to investigate. We discovered it was the test for which we had asked.

Oscar Traynor, Brigade O/C., was known as Mr. Blake and despatches were regularly arriving for him under that name.

About the end of February the enemy started the practice of surrounding large areas in the city during curfew hours and holding everybody inside their cordon for two or three days while they made house-to-house searches. One of these areas was bounded by Lower Dorset Street, Gardiner Street Upper, Mountjoy Square, Middle

Gardiner Street, Summerhill, Upper Rutland Street, Emmet Street to the North Circular Road, and North Circular to Dorset Street. Included in this area was an I.R.A. dump which was used by the 2nd Battalion and G.H.Q. Squad. It was decided to make an attempt to break the cordon by attacking it. The enemy had a barricade across Summerhill at the end of Upper Rutland Street. The 2nd Battalion placed a section of men with rifles in the public-house at the corner of Buckingham Street and Summerhill (Lloyds, I think, was the name then) and a further section with rifles in the public-house on the corner of Portland Row and Summerhill Parade, both of which points covered the enemy barricade. When all was ready it was found that there were upwards of 100 civilians congregated around the barricade. Men were sent to try to get the people away and found that they were engaged in jeering the enemy troops. When our men tried to persuade them to leave, they were inclined to treat them as enemies also. In the result, the operation had to be called off as, undoubtedly, a large number of civilian lives would have been lost if an attack had been opened. The dump escaped seizure, however.

Another big attempt to engage the enemy, that also failed, was arranged somewhere about the same time. The 2nd Battalion took up positions on the railway arch over Seville Place and in the houses on both sides between the railway arch and the North Strand. Another Company armed with Winchesters held a position in Aldborough Place, a byway off Portland Row, on the other side of the North Strand. The men on the railway had a land-mine which it was intended to drop on the enemy troops. A telephone

message was sent to the Auxiliaries at the Castle, in the name of a well-known imperialist in the Seville Place area, telling them that there seemed to be activity on the part of the I.R.A. that night in Seville Place. Four tenders of Auxiliaries came, slowed when passing Seville Place and threw searchlights down it, but proceeded up the North Strand. Apparently, they were suspicious and were not taking chances.

By this time we had the Brigade machine running very smoothly. I had been looking for an assistant as the work was really too much for me in my spare time. An order came from G.H.Q. that the Brigadier and Adjutant were to become whole-time officers. Oscar Traynor gave up his work and took over a whole-time officership. He offered me the Brigade Adjutancy but, at the same time, the position of Rate Collector was looming in the Dublin Corporation which the Adjutant-General was very insistent I should take to help to carry on the local services for the Dáil Government. After discussion, it was decided that we should get a man whom I would train in the work of Brigade Adjutant and who would then become whole-time Adjutant and I would become his assistant. Christy O'Malley was selected and became Brigade Adjutant. This, I think, was somewhere about the end of March. One of the records which we kept in the Adjutant's Department at that time was the strength of the various Dublin battalions. Unfortunately, I have no record of them now and the figures I am giving are from memory: 1st Battalion about 300, 2nd Battalion about 250, 3rd Battalion about 400, 4th Battalion about 300 and 5th Battalion about 150.

Another section of the Adjutant's Department which was brought to high efficiency was the prompt payment to dependants of arrested or wounded men of allowances made to them from the Dependants' Funds which had been established.. We usually had these

payments made in the very first week of absence. We also kept records of our operations against the enemy and I recall that at one period we had as many as fourteen a day.

Another very important job that came my way was the sifting of all the evidence accumulated against spies. It was my job to see that there was no possible doubt about the guilt of any men concerned. If there was the slightest weakness in the evidence it was my instruction to draw the attention of the Brigadier to it. I think I can definitely say that no man was executed as a spy in the Dublin Brigade area against whom the evidence was not a complete 100%.

Our First Aid and Signalling Sections were also developed to reasonable efficiency. When a man was reported wounded we sent word immediately to Mr. E. J. Toomey, M.P.S.I., who had his shop in Great Denmark Street which was just across the road from Brigade Headquarters. He was our liaison officer with our friendly doctors. He took over from us then and always succeeded in having our men properly attended to and removed to hospital, if necessary.

As soon as we were fixed in our new Brigade Headquarters at Plaza, G.H.Q. began to use our headquarters for a number of things. They took one of our rooms which was used daily by the Director of Training (J. J. O'Connell), and his Assistant (Emmet Dalton) and also by the Director of Propaganda (Peirce Beasley). Our secret hiding place was used by them and at times, particularly when alarms of raids were given by the buzzer, as happened on a few occasions, we found it very difficult to pile G.H.Q. stuff and our own into the space afforded by this hiding place. This secret-place was an ingenious contrivance designed by Seán Russell and

made by him and O/C. Brigade. It was an ordinary press about 3' long X 2'6". It was fixed with the bottom of it about 3'6" from the ground and filled the recess completely between the fireplace and the end wall of the room. A large hole had been broken into the chimney-breast. The press itself was made of tongue and grooved boards,and the board in the middle over the hole into the chimney had been eased somewhat so that with certain pressure it could rise up and give access to the papers in the secret cache. When viewed in the ordinary way it seemed just an ordinary press and gave rise to no suspicions whatever. This hiding-place was never discovered.

G.H.Q. also sent all county I.R.A. officers coming to visit any of the G.H.Q. staff first to the Plaza to see the O/C. Brigade, who had to vet them and then send them further on their journey. About this period McGurk was dismissed from his position as Brigade Quartermaster and Peadar Breslin, of the 3rd Battalion, was appointed in his place.

About April the O/C. asked me if I could contact Charlie Kenny who had not been seen by either of us for some time as he had changed his residence. I said I would try,and he then asked me, "Didn't he work in the Custom House at one time?" I was not aware of that, but I told him I had worked in the Custom House. He said, "If so, you are my man; don't bother about Charlie". He then brought me into another room, and told me he was putting me under special secrecy as, even the G.H.Q. staff, did not yet know about this contemplated operation, adding that he had his instructions direct from the President. He then told me it was proposed to burn the Custom House. He had plans of two floors

but not of the others and he wanted to get as full details as possible. After talking over things generally with him I visited the Custom House the next day and reported to him on the positions.

The public could then enter by one entrance only, now, that facing on Beresford Place. Internally, barricades of barbed wire and locked doors, reinforced with heavy presses and other furniture, had been thrown up. I reported also on the system of communications by messenger, and the rooms where the messengers waited until called, that operated in the Custom House at that time; that the stairways were all of stone; the balustrades of iron or steel; the walls all painted, and the passages floored with heavy stone flags, except the top floor, which was wooden. These and any other details that impressed me I gave him. A day or two later I took Tom Ennis, who was then O/C. of the 2nd Battalion and was to be in direct charge of the operation, through the Custom House and let him see the layout. We found that one could not afford to loiter for one moment, that one was immediately questioned.

From this time on the details of the Custom House operation were worked out, and involved several more visits by the O/C., Brigade, Tom Ennis, and, I think, some others. The operation was originally fixed for the 11th May, but was postponed until the 25th. On the afternoon of the 24th I made a last inspection of the internal position in the Custom House and reported back to the O/C. at Brigade Headquarters. He went over every detail and, on my information, he decided to increase the number of men he had considered necessary by 50%. It was also decided to carry a few hatchets and sledges to enable our men to break through the

barricades if they got trapped in the fire. I was dubious of our chances of burning the building successfully, owing to the nature of its structure, unless special attention was paid to the Will Room, in which was stored copies of all Wills that went through the Estate Duty Office, which was situated immediately above the Will Room. This Will Room was on the ground floor in the middle of the building, under the dome. The Estate Duty Office was on the next floor and was lighted from the dome, there being no third floor in that part of the building. The Will Room consisted of a series of shelvings at a distance of four or five feet from each other. These shelvings extended from floor to ceiling and were divided into large-size pigeon holes. The Wills, and papers attached to them, were kept in linen covers. My belief was that this was the only combustible part of the building capable of forming a large fire; and with the dome overhead, to act as a chimney, might make it possible to burn the whole building. He undertook to give particular instructions to see that the Will Room was well fired.

When we had completed arrangements I drew his attention to the fact that we had no exterior cover for the men engaged, and no line of retreat in case of accidents. Very much to my surprise he then informed me that G.H.Q. had prohibited his plan for external cover. He had drawn up a plan in which every line of route from every barracks in Dublin to the Custom House would be covered. It provided for setting up barricades on these routes by overturning cars etc., and at each barricade enemy forces would be ambushed. Headquarters took the view that it would make the operation too big; that we would become involved in continuous fighting and get away from the guerilla tactics of 'hit and run'.

I did not agree with the views of Headquarters, but the order was there. As a compromise, we decided to put men from the 1st Battalion at Liberty Hall, Lower Abbey Street, and Gardiner Street, to cover any enemy troops who might arrive on the scene. Particular instructions were given to those men that they must not attack enemy troops just passing through in the ordinary way; that they must first assure themselves that such troops were going to attack the Custom House. It was the best we could do but was not regarded as satisfactory. It was arranged, of course, that the Fire Stations would be held to prevent the Fire Brigade going out when called. One thing that worried us was the rumour that a secret telephone line existed from the Custom House to the Castle. All our efforts to locate it had failed and we had been assured by one of our men, who worked in the Telephones, that diligent inquiries on his part had failed to find any confirmation of the rumour. It did exist, however, and full information concerning it was received from G.H.Q. Intelligence that night. It was cut externally by Michael Cremin, just before the attack opened. He climbed a telephone pole in Store Street, in front of the Police Station, to do the job.

The O/C. met the Company Officers of the 2nd Battalion at 8 o'clock that night and arranged for them to bring the men required from each Company, and gave them detailed instructions. The operation was to take place at 1 p.m. sharp and was to be completed by 1.20 p.m. Actually we hoped that they would be through by 1.30 p.m., but the instruction was 1.20 p.m. On the next day I had instructions to make a last external survey of the Custom House at 12.30 p.m. and report back to the O/C. promptly at 12.45 p.m. at the Typographical Hall in Lower Gardiner Street, our old Brigade Headquarters, which we took over again for this action.

When I arrived at the Custom House at 12.30 p.m. there was a military lorry outside the only open entrance (Beresford Place). It appeared to be on some ordinary business and, after watching it from under the Railway arches for about seven minutes, it went away. I went around to the Quay side of the Custom House and, at the gate leading on to the Custom House Dock in the east end of the building, which was to be used by some of our men as their means of entrance, I found a trader's car just coming out. An official, in uniform, followed it, closed the gate behind him and turned a key in the lock. He carried that key to a little office at the corner of the main building of the Custom House and hung it up on a hook with other keys. Everything else around the Custom House seemed quite normal and I reported back to the O/C. as directed, giving him these details. I found a special squad of men, who had been detailed to hold up the military guard, receiving their instructions from Paddy Daly. The O/C. was listening to my report and, at the same time, listening to Captain Paddy Daly giving his instructions. Daly had just dismissed his men when the O/C. said, "Paddy, you forgot the password." The men had to be called back and given the password, which was "Clontarf". This was another instance of the O/C's wonderful grip of detail. Even though listening to my report he had noted Paddy Daly's omission. I asked for my instructions and I was ordered to take charge in Lower Gardiner Street and deal with anything that might crop up. When I reminded the O/C. that I was to have gone into the Custom House, on the operation, I was promptly ordered to obey my instructions.

The military guard was overcome quite successfully. The paraffin oil, which was used in the burning, had been obtained by the seizure of an oil lorry a few days previously in Poplar Row, Ballybough. The oil had been transferred from the oil tank into petrol tins for convenience in carrying it. The lorry conveying these tins was to

have arrived by the gate on the Custom House Quay which I had seen being locked on my last inspection. When the lorry arrived, however, the key could not be found and, although several keys were tried, the gate could not be opened. Ultimately it was decided to take the oil in by the Beresford Place entrance, which entrance we had tried to avoid using as it was directly under the view of Store Street Police Station. The telephone wire from that station had, however, been cut; but this enforced change of plan delayed matters as it was just 1.10 p.m. when the lorry with the oil arrived at the Beresford Place door. The cans were unloaded and the men proceeded to their allotted stations. Each floor of the building, or particular parts of the floors, were in charge of a Company O/C., and the signal for calling off the men was to be two sharp blasts on the Battalion O/C's whistle. Due to a coincidence two Company Commanders' whistles were sounded almost together; some men mistook the signal and started to retire. The Battalion O/C. ordered them back again to ensure that the top floor of the building was set alight. It was very necessary to set fire to this floor; firstly, because it was floored in wood, and secondly, because it contained some offices of great importance to the enemy such as Income Tax Arrears Office, which it was vital to burn so as to hinder the functioning of the British regime in Ireland. All these incidents caused some delay.

The orders to the men were that on entering a room the first step to be taken was to close all windows. While this procedure would retard the burning, it was felt to be necessary, in the interests of our men, not to attract any undue attention to the Custom House before our forces had retired. Oscar Traynor, who was on duty immediately outside the Custom House at Beresford Place, told me that he saw smoke coming from one window of the

Custom House a few minutes after the arrival of the oil. This, obviously, was due to some men, in their excitement, forgetting their instructions and overlooking this rather vital detail.

How word reached the enemy Forces I do not know, but I was standing on the steps of the Typographical Union's premises in Lower Gardiner Street, looking towards the Custom House, about 1.20 or 1.25 p.m. when the shooting broke out. It developed very rapidly. Shortly after it started a convoy of the steel trolleys which the Dublin Corporation used in those days to convey the rubbish from the Stanley Street Destructor to the sloblands at Fairview, and which ran on the tram tracks, came round the corner from Talbot Street into Gardiner Street. Immediately they appeared, intensive machine-gun fire was opened on them and I saw the men engaged on them taking what cover they could, and some of them running for their lives across the street. I then went upstairs to our old Brigade headquarters to see that everything was in order before I left, and found four Peter-the-Painter automatics, without ammunition, lying in a handbag. I took them with me, on my bike, and proceeded to the Plaza. In conversation with O/C., Brigade, I found that he had got a bullet through his coat when escaping from the scene of operations.

Assessing our position a little later we discovered that a large number of our men had been captured; we were not sure how many were killed or injured. We knew their Commandant, Tom Ennis, was badly wounded, but had escaped, and was now in hospital. We knew that Seán Doyle was wounded but had been got away. He died a few days later. That evening in the Brigade Office there

was a great silence. We were thinking that our success in burning the Custom House had been too dearly bought by the large number of our best fighters who had been captured. These included a big proportion of the A.S.U. and it struck us that, unless daytime operations were carried on at once, the enemy would know that they had captured the A.S.U., and ill-treat and torture all their captives with this in mind. That evening I sent out an urgent call to all battalions to arrange for men to carry on daytime operations, during the next few days, until we could get a new A.S.U. together. The response to this appeal was marvellous and, at their dinner time, two days later, one Company of the 3rd Battalion put up a magnificent fight with the Auxiliaries in Pearse Street, between Shaw Street and Tara Street. The other Battalions responded equally well. Men took time off from their jobs, at their own expense, to carry out operations and, all-round, the response of the men of the Dublin Brigade was magnificent. I think we succeeded in our object of dissuading the Auxiliaries from believing they had captured our A.S.U., and the news of the continuous and extensive fighting in the city was a tonic to our men in Jail.

With Christy O'Malley, I visited the Custom House that evening about 5 o'clock. We found Auxiliaries raiding Talbot Street from house to house. We got right up to Beresford Place and found a fireman with his hose trained on the fire, but his jet of water was falling on the footpath outside. He was being remonstrated with by an Auxiliary officer but persistently refused to go closer. I discovered, to my surprise, that the part of the building immediately adjacent to the entrance at Beresford Place was burning fiercely, and I then remembered that I had overlooked

the Stamping Office, as inflammable, when reporting to the O/C. It was quite clear that the fire had got a fierce hold on the ink in that department. As is now well known, the fire burned for ten days, the whole building was completely destroyed, and its destruction struck the mightiest blow yet delivered to the enemies' control in this country. It was the main factor in bringing about the Truce, and the Brigade Staff soon threw off the gloom that enveloped them on the evening of the burning of the Custom House, and saw the position in its true perspective.

On the next evening I had the malancholy duty of going to St. Agatha's Church, North William Street, to receive the Remains of Paddy O'Reilly, Quartermaster, 2nd Battalion, who had been killed in the Custom House battle. After the majority of the relatives and friends were gone, his brother, Tom, opened the coffin for me and showed me where poor Paddy had, apparently, been finished by a bullet through the head. There was a small bullet entrance wound in the side of his nose, which plainly showed scorching, indicating that the gun, presumably an automatic, had been placed right at his head when fired. He told me also that there was another corpse in King George's (now St. Bricin's) Hospital which he was sure was that of Stephen, his younger brother, who was Assistant Adjutant of the 2nd Battalion. Stephen was a brilliant young lad, only 16 years of age, who had already contributed profusely, in verse and prose, to Brian O'Higgins' "Banba", a national paper for youths. Tom had been afraid to inform his mother but, unfortunately, it was too true, and the next evening I had to repeat my melancholy duty for Stephen.

Besides the brothers Reilly we lost three other Volunteers named Eddie Dorrins, Seán Doyle and Dan Heade.

Our next big job was to recruit for the A.S.U. and we found a huge number of Volunteers. Within a week it had been re-formed and the war proceeded as hitherto, but with a higher tempo. The Custom House attack seemed to have had a wonderful effect on the morale, both of our men and the populace. Shortly afterwards the British Motor repairing depot in Parkgate Street, formerly the Munition Factory during the first world war, was burned to the ground. This was achieved through two I.R.A. men, who worked there, leaving the stump of a lighted candle, surrounded by inflammable material, when they were leaving their day's work. As well as I remember, they were men of the 3rd Battalion but I cannot recall their names.

Coming on towards the Truce, Oscar Traynor's health began to give way. He had been working every day, including Sundays, from morning until late at night and again, after he got home, until 3 and 4 o'clock in the mornings. He was ordered a complete change of atmosphere and rest by his Doctor, and just a week or two before the Truce had to go on a holiday to Wales. The work of the Brigade, which had now come to be regarded as routine, went on right up to the Truce.

SIGNED: Harry Colley

DATE: 27th Sept 1957

WITNESS: Dean Brennan Lieut-Col.