

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 1720

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1720.

Witness

John Manning,
Moulnahorna, Carrigrohane,
Co. Cork.

Identity.

Member of Donoughmore Battalion,
Flying Column, Cork 1. Brigade, I.R.A.

Subject.

Donoughmore Company, Cork 1. Brigade, I.R.A.
1915 - 1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil.

File No. S. 473.

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No. W.S. 1720

STATEMENT BY JOHN MANNING,

Moulnahorna, Carriganinma, Co. Cork.

I was born at Gurranneredmond, Donoughmore, on 10th October, 1893. I was educated at Stuake National School until I was about 15 years of age, when I went to work as a farm labourer in my home district.

Donoughmore Company of the Irish Volunteers was organised by Patrick Looney, Meenachonee, in the first week of October, 1915. Eighteen men joined at the start. Training instructions were given by Pat. Higgins of Cork after Stuake Mass. The company held regular weekly parades after that, and additional members joined its ranks. Instruction in drill was given by me, taken from a British Infantry Training Manual.

The first public parade of the company outside its own area took place in November, 1915. It was to the Manchester Martyrs Commemoration parade in Cork City. Thirty men from the company took part in it. Later we held parades to Peake, Rylane, Nadd and Ahabullogue, with the result that other companies were formed in these places.

The weekly parades were continued. The men paid a regular weekly subscription, and out of this fund we purchased a miniature rifle which was used for target practice. Two old rifles which had been in the area since the Fenian times were used for rifle drill, although they were useless as weapons.

In January, 1916, I attended the course of training for officers, carried out by J.J. O'Connell at the hall in Sheares St. On my return from the course, I was appointed Company Captain. The area of the company was very large

and it was then organised into four sections. The following officers and Section Commanders were appointed, and no change took place in these appointments down to Easter, 1916: -

Captain	-	John Manning
1st Lieutenant	-	Joseph Collins
2nd Lieutenant	-	Jeremiah Scanlon
Adjutant	-	William Kelleher
Quartermaster	-	Thomas Scanlon.

Section Commanders

No. 1 Section	-	Denis Murphy
No. 2 Section	-	James Barrett
No. 3 Section	-	Pat Collins
No. 4 Section	-	Maurice Brew.

These nine men comprised the Company Council.

In addition to the ordinary weekly parade, they met weekly as a Council and for additional instruction at Mullane's Forge, Stuake.

A British recruiting meeting was advertised to take place in Stuake on 15th March, 1916. Word was sent to the Courtbrack Company to parade with us at Stuake that day. The car in which the speakers for the meeting were (they included one of the Day's of Cork) arrived and the crowd gathered round it. As the meeting was about to commence, I ordered the Donoughmore Company to "fall in" close by. They did so, and I marched the company round the car. Courtbrack Company arrived soon afterwards. All the crowd dispersed and the speakers were left without any audience, apart from the members of the R.I.C. who were present.

Forty men from the company took part in the St. Patrick's Day parade in Cork in 1916. Sixteen were armed with shotguns and some with croppy pikes. Some shotguns

had been purchased at this time, also a large quantity of shotgun ammunition. Thirteen croppy pikes had been made by local blacksmiths - Patrick Collins and Joseph Collins. The pike handles were supplied and fitted by Patrick Daly and his brother.

The company was on parade on Friday evening, April 21st, 1916, when a dispatch arrived from Brigade Headquarters. It was received by me. It contained the instructions for the parade on Easter Sunday. The company was dismissed and a Company Council meeting held. At this meeting, orders were issued, in accordance with the instructions received, for a mobilisation of the whole company at Coolmona on Easter Sunday at 11 a.m. sharp, with all arms, ammunition and equipment and two days' rations. Instructions were given to have the mobilisation carried out as quickly as possible so as not to arouse the suspicions of the R.I.C. The men received their mobilisation orders during Saturday. We had no definite information that this was anything more than an ordinary parade, but the general feeling at the time was tense and we felt that the order might mean business. I had been at a brigade meeting in Cork on, I think, the second Sunday before Easter, and Tadhg Barry told me there was something on.

The following mobilised at Coolmona at 11 a.m. on Easter Sunday: -

Joe Henchion, Nadd.	
John Manning, Gurraneremond, Donoughmore.	
Patrick Looney, Meenachonee,	"
Maurice Brew, Kilmartin,	"
James Barry, Coollick,	"
William Kelleher, Ballykerwick,	"
Patrick Daly, Ballycunningham,	"
Denis Daly,	"
James Daly,	"
Edward Daly,	"
James Barrett, Firmount,	"
John O'Shea, Kilmartin,	"
Richard O'Leary,	"
William Foley, Knockrourke,	"

Tim Dineen, Knockrourke, Donoughmore.
 Batt Healy, Lackabawn, "
 Thomas Downey, " "
 Pat J. Murphy, " "
 Denis Murphy, Meenachonee, "
 Tim Sexton, " "
 Pat Collins, Ballykerwick, "
 Joe Collins, " "
 Denis Kelleher, " "
 Pat O'Meara, Firmount, "
 John Murphy, Coolmona, "
 Thomas O'Neill, " "
 Michael Healy, Lackabawn, "
 Charles Hurley, " "
 Thomas Forde, Coolmona, "
 Thomas Healy, Fornaght, "
 Timothy Cremin, Boola, Beeing, Mallow.
 Mick Sullivan, Ballykerwick, Donoughmore.
 Pat Sullivan, " "
 John MacSweeney, Meenachonee, "
 Jim Connell, Kilmartrin.
 Denis O'Callaghan, Firmount.
 John O'Shea, Lackabawn.
 Peter Murphy, Firmount.
 Peter O'Callaghan, do.

The arms which the company had on that day were: -
 seventeen shotguns, with 1,500 rounds of ammunition,
 thirteen pikes, two revolvers, with 40 rounds of ammunition.

The company marched to Beeing, arriving there at
 12.30, the time appointed in the orders. Companies from
 Courtbrack, Whitechurch, Mourne Abbey, Mallow, Castletownroche
 and Nadd paraded there also. Michael Lynch arrived on a
 motor cycle, and some exercises were carried out.

Later in the evening, Tomás MacCurtain arrived in a
 car. There were other officers with him. I think
 Terence MacSwiney was one of them. MacCurtain ordered the
 company to return to _____ and remain under arms
 until further orders. The company marched back to its
 own area that night, and the men returned to their homes
 with instructions to be available at short notice.
 The car containing Tomás MacCurtain and the other officers
 had passed us at Beenalought going towards Donoughmore,
 when we were marching back.

On Monday and Tuesday, most of the officers were engaged in loading shotgun ammunition with slugs.

On Wednesday, Jeremiah Scanlon and Denis Daly were sent in to Headquarters in Cork to seek information or orders. They came back with the same order we had received on Easter Sunday evening.

On Friday of Easter Week, a special courier arrived from Headquarters to arrange for the transfer of arms out from the city and the dumping of them in the company area. Three men with horses and carts were sent to Cork for the purpose of bringing out the arms. Two of the men, Maurice Brew of Kilmartin and John Scanlon of Bauracharing, arrived in the city and reported to Headquarters there. They were informed that an agreement had been made to hand over the arms to the Bishop of Cork. No arms or ammunition were surrendered or lost in raids in the company area. There were no arrests.

I was sworn into membership of the I.R.B. by Seán O'Sullivan when I was on the course in Cork in January, 1916. I was the only member of the company in the organisation.

There were no Fianna or Cumann na mBan organisations in the company area before 1916.

On the Tuesday following Easter Week, a messenger arrived from Brigade H.Q. in Cork City to make arrangements for the removal and dumping of the arms belonging to the Cork City Battalion in our area. I dispatched two horses and carts, driven by members of the company, to the city. On their arrival, they were informed that the rifles had been handed over on the previous night to the Bishop of Cork, so they returned to their own area without the arms.

There were no arrests in the area after Easter Week. The Volunteer organisation continued to carry on, but was now operating more or less underground. Parades were not held as frequently as prior to Easter Week. However, all members met and drilled in the fields in the district.

Early in 1917, following the release of the internees from Frongoch, the reorganisation of the Volunteers was undertaken. The strength of the Donoughmore Company at this stage was about 40. It was increased slowly by the recruitment of selected men who were known to have a sound national outlook. As the summer of 1917 advanced, the strength of the company (Donoughmore) reached about 50. The officers of the unit now were: -

O/C	-	John Manning (witness)
1st Lt.	-	Joe Collins
2nd Lt.	-	Jerh. Scanlan.

There were also four Section Commanders, viz. Joseph Collins (No. 1), Maurice Brew (No. 2), James Barrett (No. 3), and Denis Murphy (No. 4). In addition to attending the normal parades of the company, these four N.C.O.s were trained at special sessions attended only by themselves and the officers of the company.

As 1917 advanced, the company (Donoughmore) took a hand in the formation and organisation of other Volunteer units in the surrounding districts. Our usual mode of procedure was to go on a route march into an area - usually on a Sunday evening - and to make contact with some of the locals who were interested. Our contacts were usually made with members of the local G.A.A. club. Amongst the areas in which we helped to organise Volunteer

companies at this time were: - Nadd, Peake, Aghabollogue and Beeing, Rylane.

There was no battalion organisation in the area at this period and Donoughmore Company was an independent unit of Cork Brigade. In my capacity as O/C of the company, I attended several Brigade Council meetings which at this time were mainly concerned with organisation work. The meetings were held at irregular intervals in Cork City, or in other suitable districts.

Two members of the company - Jerh. Scanlan and Patrick Collins - were arrested about October, 1917. They were charged with unlawful assembly and were tried at the local Petty Sessions Court. They were each sentenced to 14 days imprisonment. They were released after three days hunger-strike.

As the organisation of the district for Volunteer purposes was now practically complete, it was decided to form a battalion based on Donoughmore. It was now close to the end of the year 1917. There were companies of the Volunteers in Donoughmore, Courtbrack, Grenagh, Berrings (Inniscarra), Blarney, Rylane and Mourne Abbey. These companies were now organised as Donoughmore Battalion (14th), Cork Brigade. The first officers of this battalion were: -

O/C	-	Patrick ("Pa") Twomey
Vice O/C	-	Thos. J. Golden
Adjt.	-	Denis McCarthy
Q/M	-	Jim Barrett (I think).

In December, 1917, Mourne Abbey Company was transferred from Donoughmore to Mallow Battalion.

There was a big influx of new recruits when the British threatened to enforce Conscription in the early part of 1918. The strength of the Donoughmore Company now reached about 100. There was no change in the officers of the unit. All officers were now busy training the new recruits, while the "old reliables" were engaged on the manufacture of home-made bombs and buckshot as well as re-loading cartridges. All available arms in the area were now collected in a series of raids which were carried out by selected men. In all cases, the arms, mainly shotguns, were surrendered voluntarily. Our armament at this time consisted of about twenty shotguns, a miniature rifle (.22), four revolvers (.38), 2,000 rounds shotgun ammunition, 100 rounds revolver and 500 rounds miniature rifle ammunition. Special attention was paid to the training of the company at this period, as an armed protest was inevitable should the British proceed to enforce Conscription.

The threat of Conscription passed during the summer of 1918 and there was a slight reduction in the strength of the company (Donoughmore). However, the vast majority of the new recruits continued to serve.

Training was now becoming more advanced. During the summer of 1918, week-end manoeuvres were carried out on several occasions. These operations, in which three or four neighbouring companies, and sometimes all the companies in the battalion, took part, were carried out under the control of one of the battalion officers. On these occasions, the men learned to move across country utilising the available cover, while selected men were being trained as scouts or signallers.

There was a change in the officers of the battalion (Donoughmore) about November, 1918, as the O/C (Pa Twomey) resigned owing to ill-health. He was replaced by the Vice O/C (Thos. J. Golden). The officers of Donoughmore Battalion now were:

	O/C	-	Thos. J. Golden
Vice	O/C	- -	Richard O'Mahoney
	Adjt.	-	Denis McCarthy
	Q/M	-	Jim Barrett.

There was no activity in our own area in connection with the General Election in December, 1918, as the Sinn Féin candidate - Terence MacSwiney - was returned unopposed. However, I took a party of about 40 men from Donoughmore Company into Cork City to assist in election work there. We were billeted in W.L. Kelleher's yard in Drinan St. We remained in the city for three days.

It was now decided to reorganise Cork Brigade, which contained about twenty battalions and embraced the whole of Cork County. The county was now divided into three areas and a separate brigade organisation was set up in each area. Our battalion (Donoughmore) now became a unit of Cork No. 1 Brigade, which included the areas of Mid and East Cork as well as Cork City. The battalions in the brigade were: - Cork City (Nos. 1 and 2), Ovens (No. 3), Cobh (No. 4), Whitechurch (No. 5), Donoughmore (No. 6), Macroom (No. 7), Ballyvourney (No. 8), Passage West (No. 9). The first officers of this brigade were, I think: -

	O/C	-	Tomás MacCurtain
Vice	O/C	-	Terence MacSwiney
	Adjt.	-	Florrie O'Donoghue
	Q/M	-	Seán MacSwiney.

Normal training continued throughout 1919 and, in addition, we were busy on the manufacture of home-made bombs, collecting arms and organising functions to raise funds for the purchase of guns. During the summer and autumn of this year, I organised six concerts and a sports meeting in co-operation with the other members of the company (Donoughmore). As a result, we raised £100 for the company funds. In addition to our activities of a military nature, the members of the unit took part in the organisation and collection of the first Dáil Éireann Loan at this time.

The Bowen-Colthurst family, one of whom shot Sheehy-Skeffington in Dublin during Easter Week, were resident in the Dripsey area, where they were more or less boycotted. They set up a cheese factory in the area and were being supplied with milk by about half a dozen farmers with an imperialist outlook. We decided to see that the boycott was fully enforced, so on August 15th 1919 I took a party of about ten men from Donoughmore to the vicinity of Dripsey, where we held up the milk carts on their way to the cheese factory. We spilled the milk and smashed up some of the carts - at the same time warning the drivers to inform the farmers for whom they worked, to discontinue supplying milk to the Bowen-Colthurst firm. As a result of this raid, the cheese factory went out of business.

About this period, I took charge of a party of about half a dozen men from the company (Donoughmore) which carried out a number of raids for arms in the Nadd and Newberry, Mallow districts. We captured six shotguns and a small supply of ammunition.

I should have mentioned previously that, in addition to attending to the organisation and training of the company, I presided at weekly meetings of the Company Council, as well as attending meetings of the Battalion Council which, as far as I can recollect, were held at fortnightly intervals. The Company Council meetings were attended by the officers and Section Commanders of the company. At these meetings, all activities of the company were discussed, and reports on same furnished to Battalion H.Q. The Battalion Council meetings were attended by the members of the Battalion Staff and the O/C of each company in the battalion. Here the company reports were discussed, as well as orders from Brigade H.Q. or G.H.Q.

There were two officers from outside the area 'on the run' in the district at this time - Ben O'Hickey and Leo Murphy. In co-operation with three members of the company (Donoughmore), they arranged to attack two members of the R.I.C. in Berrings towards the end of September, 1919. The members of my company who took part in this attack were Jerh. Scanlon (1st Lieut.), Humphrey Kelleher and Dan McCarthy. The operation was undertaken on a Sunday morning as the R.I.C. men, who were armed with revolvers, left the church after Mass at Berrings. The R.I.C. resisted and one of them was seriously wounded. Two revolvers and some ammunition were taken by the raiding party, who returned to my company area. Despite the fact that one of the men who took part was 1st Lieutenant of the company (Donoughmore), I was consulted about the proposed operation.

Some days after the attack on the R.I.C. at Berrings, a Battalion Council meeting was held at Firmount.

This meeting was attended by the Brigade Adjutant (Florrie O'Donoghue). I raised the question of the activities of the men 'on the run' - Leo Murphy and Ben O'Hickey - and pointed out that they appeared to be taking control of the operations in the district. The Brigade Adjutant ruled that they had no authority to organise or undertake operations in the area without the prior consent of the Company O/C.

On November 12th 1919, an ex-British officer - Dr. Sanderford - from Cork City was fowling in the area. He was held up by four members of the Donoughmore Company - Dan McCarthy, Richard O'Leary, Maurice Brew and Michael O'Shea. His shotgun and ammunition and .38 revolver were taken from him. On the same date, three other members of the company - Denis O'Callaghan, Wm. Foley and Denis Murphy - were operating on another road in order to make sure that this man was intercepted.

Training was now becoming more intensive, and special services - engineering, transport, intelligence - were now organised on a thorough basis. Selected men from each company and battalion were trained in these services. Beyond the normal training, there were no activities during the remaining portion of 1919.

The next operation in the company (Donoughmore) area was planned for February 20th 1920, when a strong party - about 20 - from the company took up ambush positions at Tullig on the Donoughmore-Coachford road about two miles from Donoughmore. We were on high ground overlooking the road. The majority of the party were at the western side. With the exception of two men, who were armed with rifles, the others carried shotguns. The party was extended over a distance of about 80 yards.

We took up positions about 3 p.m. to await a party of R.I.C. on their way back from an enquiry at Coachford. We remained in position until about 4.30 p.m., when we received word from one of our scouts that the R.I.C. had returned to Donoughmore by another road. I was in charge of this abortive operation. Amongst the members of Donoughmore Company who took part were: - Jim Barry, Patk. Murphy, Michael Healy, Maurice Brew, Tom Scanlon, Eugene Foley, Richard O'Leary, James Brew, Eugene Sullivan, Jerh. O'Callaghan, Denis Murphy, Dan Healy, John Crowley, Ml. O'Shea, Wm. Foley, Patk. O'Connell, Tom Healy, Jack Manning (witness).

Early in March, 1920, two members of the R.I.C. from Donoughmore were driven to the annual point-to-point races at Forest, near Blarney, by a shopkeeper named Michael R. Walsh. When I learned of their departure, I immediately set about making arrangements to ambush the party on their return journey. I mobilised a party of about twenty. The majority of them had been at Tullig some days before. We were armed with two rifles and a number of shotguns. We took up a position at Clonmoyle on the Donoughmore-Coachford road about 3.30 p.m. We were behind the roadside fence about 2½ miles from Coachford, but although we remained there until close on 6 p.m., the R.I.C. party did not pass. We then withdrew from the position and returned to our homes. We learned later that the R.I.C. men and their driver had returned to their base (Donoughmore) by another road. Amongst the men who were mobilised for this abortive job were: Dan McCarthy, Jim Barry, Patk. J. Murphy, Batt. Healy, Richard O'Leary, Jerh. O'Callaghan, Maurice Brew, Eugene Foley, Ml. Healy, Eugene Sullivan, John Crowley, Wm. Foley, Patk. O'Connell, Denis Murphy, Michael O'Shea, Jack Manning (witness).

It was now decided at a meeting of the Company Council of Donoughmore Company to boycott Michael R. Walsh who had driven the members of the R.I.C. to the races. Notices regarding the boycott were posted up throughout the area, and within a matter of twenty-four hours Michael R. Walsh was without any customers. After about two months, Mr. Walsh decided to apologise for having co-operated with the enemy forces. He apologised in public at the church gate one Sunday after Mass, and the boycott was then lifted. There was another boycott case in which two brothers - Philip and Tom Barrett - who helped to till the garden plot attached to the R.I.C. barracks, were similarly dealt with. The boycott in this case was lifted after negotiations with the local Catholic Curate - Fr. Smith - on somewhat similar terms.

All members of Donoughmore Company paraded under my command at the funerals of Tomás MacCurtain in March, 1920, and Terence MacSwiney in October, 1920. Tomás MacCurtain was murdered in his home by British forces, and Terence MacSwiney died on hunger-strike in Brixton Prison, London. Both men were, at the time of their deaths, O/C, Cork 1 Brigade, I.R.A.

On Easter Saturday night, 1920, I took a party of men from Donoughmore Company to Rylane, where we set fire to the evacuated R.I.C. barracks. This operation was carried out in accordance with the instructions in a general order from G.H.Q. that all evacuated enemy posts throughout the country should be destroyed on this date. The members of the company who took part were: - Maurice Brew, James Brew, Eugene Foley, Richard O'Leary, Michael O'Shea, Wm. Ahern, Tim Dinan, Patk. O'Sullivan, Denis Murphy, Dan McCarthy, Wm. Kelleher, Wm. Foley, Batt Healy,

Tom Downey, Dan Healy, Denis Kelleher, Jack Manning.

Some days following the burning of Rylane R.I.C. barracks, I was arrested and taken to Cork Jail. I was removed to Crumlin Road Jail, Belfast, about a week later. Three days later, I went on hunger-strike with a number of other I.R.A. prisoners. On the evening of the third day of the strike, the prisoners were removed in a British warship to Wales, and on to Wormwood Scrubbs Prison in London area. When I had been 24 days on hunger-strike, I was removed to an outside hospital, and some ten days later I was taken to the home of an Irish resident in London. Eventually I returned to my home area towards the end of May, 1920.

Within a few days, I had resumed my normal duties as O/C of the company (Donoughmore), and on the evening of June 1st 1920 I marched the majority of the members of the unit to Healy's Bridge on the Leemount road leading from Ballincollig to Blarney. We took positions on high ground overlooking the road to await any enemy reinforcements which might travel this road to the relief of the garrison of Blarney R.I.C. barracks, which was being attacked by a party of I.R.A. men drawn from the battalions in Cork City. We took our positions about 8 p.m. and blocked the road by felling a tree across it. A second tree was in the course of being sawn through when a party of military drove up to the first tree in a Crossley tender. Fire was immediately opened on the enemy by my section. This fusilade was replied to, and during a sharp exchange the enemy transport reversed out of the position, turned and made off towards Ballincollig. We now moved to higher ground, still holding command of the road, until we were called off about 9.30 p.m. (I think).

We had withdrawn some time when a party of military on foot arrived in the area.

The men from my company (Donoughmore), and all other units engaged, now withdrew to their home areas. As I was not feeling quite fit after the Wormwood Scrubbs hunger-strike, I did not continue on to my home district but billeted in a house on the way. As far as I can recollect, Donoughmore R.I.C. barracks, which had been evacuated some days before, was burned by my colleagues on their way back from Blarney.

The next operation in which the members of Donoughmore Company took part was the attack on Carrigadrohid R.I.C. post by the men of Macroom Battalion on the night of June 9th 1920. On this occasion, the full company was mobilised and was engaged in roadblocking and outpost duty on the Coachford road. All covering parties and outposts were armed - mainly with shotguns.

Towards the end of June, 1920, another abortive effort to engage the enemy occurred. On this occasion, about a dozen men from Donoughmore Company were mobilised at short notice in the vicinity of Crean's Cross on the Ballycunningham-Donoughmore road. They were to engage a patrol of two R.I.C. men and one soldier who were reported to have gone towards Donoughmore. They had only been in their position a short time when they received information that the patrol had left the area by another route. The ambush party moved hurriedly across country in an effort to intercept the enemy near Matehy, but they were late, as the patrol had passed through the selected position. I was not present on this occasion as, due to the necessity for urgent mobilisation, word of the proposed operation could not be sent to me in time.

The members of the company who were in position on this occasion were: - Dan McCarthy (1st Lieut.), Patk. Sullivan, Denis Daly, Maurice Brew, John Healy, Ml. O'Shea, James Brew, John Regan, Jas. Barry, Wm. Kelleher, Richard O'Leary and Denis Kelleher.

On the evening of July 14th 1920, a military lorry conveying stores - mainly camping equipment - was held up at Barracharrig on the Cork-Banteer road and destroyed by fire. The men who took part in this operation were: - John J. O'Leary (Battalion O/C), Dan McCarthy, Jas. Barry, Jas. Brew, Richard O'Leary, Eugene Foley, Pat O'Sullivan, Ml. O'Shea, John Regan and Tom Scanlon. This was another hurried job and only men in the vicinity at the time were engaged.

Some members of the company (Donoughmore), under Dan McCarthy (1st Lieut.), carried out a raid on Kilmurry railway station on the night of July 16th 1920, and seized a quantity of petrol in tins. The captured stores were dumped in Donoughmore area. The men who took part were: - Dan McCarthy, Mce. Brew, Eugene Foley, Richard O'Leary, Ml. O'Shea, Denis Kelleher, Patk. Sullivan and John Regan.

Our next effort to engage the enemy also proved abortive, although we remained in position each evening from about 6 p.m. to 11 p.m. over a period of a week or so. We were awaiting a military lorry which was reported to have passed through the position occupied by us at Kilcullen on the Donoughmore-Rylane road at least once a week. On this occasion, a party of about 50 men drawn from the company (Donoughmore) were on duty each evening, but the lorry did not travel. The party were armed - two with rifles and the remainder with shotguns - and

were in position on high ground at both sides of the road.

On the night of August 31st 1920, I mobilised eight members of Donoughmore Company at Stuake about midnight. I was armed with a rifle. The others had shotguns. We moved off about 4 a.m. to Inniscarra, where we met representatives from the other companies in the battalion (Donoughmore). The combined force, which numbered about 60, was in charge of the Battalion O/C (John J. O'Leary). I was allocated to a position on high ground north of the road from Dripsey to Inniscarra and about one mile from the latter. The majority of the party were on the same side of the road, but there were men on the southern side with the River Lee to their rear. All positions were occupied about 8 a.m. The whole party were extended over a distance of about 80 yards. We were awaiting a convoy of military.

We had been in position about two hours when four lorries of troops approached our position from Dripsey. It was intended to allow the three leading lorries to pass through and to block the road by throwing a tree trunk across it as the last lorry entered the position. The leading lorries passed through as arranged, but the men deputed to block the road failed to do so and the fourth lorry passed through. As it was observed that the road block had failed, fire was opened on this lorry and we had to be satisfied with sniping at the retreating enemy. As we were within two miles of the strong enemy garrison at Ballincollig, we were ordered to withdraw from the area without delay. I returned to Donoughmore area with the other members of my party as the representatives from the other companies moved off towards their home districts. The representatives

of Donoughmore Company who took part in this operation were: Maurice Brew, Patk. J. Murphy, Dan McCarthy, Michael O'Shea, Patk. O'Connell, John Crowley, Denis Kelleher, Michael Healy, Jack Manning (witness).

About this time, a prison warder named Griffin attached to Cork Jail was taken prisoner by the I.R.A. as he was not friendly to the I.R.A. prisoners who were on hunger-strike in that jail. He was removed to Goulane in Donoughmore Company area, where he was detained for about six weeks. He was then removed to Kilcullen, from where he escaped but was recaptured within 24 hours. He was transferred to Cork City about two months after he had been taken into the area.

Information was received early in October, 1920, that the enemy forces were threatening to burn Dripsey Woollen Mills. Arrangements to guard the premises were made immediately, and I was instructed to post a strong guard in the vicinity of the premises. I mobilised 15 members of the company (Donoughmore), armed with shotguns, and we took up positions surrounding the mill each night for a week. As there was no activity by the enemy during this period, the guard was withdrawn.

Acting on instructions from Battalion H.Q., I mobilised about twenty men from the company on October 20th 1920. We were about to proceed to Glencaum in Grenagh Company area, where it was intended to attack a military convoy in co-operation with men drawn from the other companies in the battalion, when word was received that the operation had been called off.

It was now decided by the Brigade Council to impose a levy on all landholders and property owners in order

to raise funds to place a "Flying Column" in the field on a full-time basis. This levy was called the Arms Fund Levy. The amount of the levy to be collected in each case depended, in the case of farmers, on the number of stock carried on the farm. The Poor Law Valuation of the premises governed the amount to be paid in other cases. The duty of collecting this levy fell on the shoulders of the officers of each company, and involved visits to each household in the company area to collect the amount of the levy assessed in each case. This work was carried on in addition to the normal training during the months of October, November and December, 1920.

Early in January, 1921, a Battalion Flying Column was formed in our battalion area. The members of the column were drawn from the various companies in the battalion. They were assembled at a camp in Kilcullen on the border of Rylane and Donoughmore Company areas. The strength of the column was about 30. After about ten days training, some men returned to their own areas and they were replaced by others. The activities at the camp continued for about a month, by which time approximately 60 men had been trained in the care and use of the rifle. Owing to the scarcity of ammunition, the musketry course at the camp was fired with .22 ammunition and miniature rifles. The representatives on the column from Donoughmore Company were: - Dan McCarthy, Paddy Collins, Ml. O'Shea, Patk. Twomey, Michael Healy, Patk. J. Murphy, Patk. O'Connell, Denis Murphy, Jim Barrett, Patk. O'Mahoney, Tim McCarthy, Humphrey Kelleher, and Jack Manning (witness). There were, I think, two others whose names I cannot now recollect. All the above named took part in the engagement at Dripsey on January 18th 1921. The Battalion O/C (John J. O'Leary) was O/C of the column.

On the night of January 27th 1921, the column left Kilcullen about midnight and marched across country to the vicinity of Dripsey. We rested here in Shaughnessy's farmhouse in Peake until about 6 a.m. on January 28th 1921. The entire column - to the number of about 60 - marched to a position which had already been selected by the Column O/C (John J. O'Leary) and other battalion officers. Mce. Brew (2nd Lieut.) was now left in charge of the company area. The position extended from east to west parallel with the Dripsey-Coachford road and extended for a distance of about 200 yards, and was on high ground overlooking the road. I was placed in charge of the party of men from my own company (Donoughmore) whose names are listed at the end of the previous paragraph. We were allocated to a position in the vicinity of Godfrey's Cross on eastern flank. We were under cover of a made trench about 10 yards from the road and were extended over a distance of about 25 yards. We were all armed with rifles. The remainder of the column, under the O/C (John J. O'Leary), were extended over a distance of about 150 yards towards Coachford on my right. Scouts and outposts from the local companies were posted to the west, east and north of our positions. All sections were in position about 6.30 a.m. A number of men had been allocated to prepare trees to be allowed to fall across the road as roadblocks at a given signal. All our men were north of the road.

We remained in our positions until about 4 p.m. without any sign of enemy activity. About this time I noticed a man running across a field on the opposite side of the road. He was followed in a minute or two by a second man. I then became suspicious of their movements and put my glasses on the area where I had seen them.

Within a few minutes I saw two columns of soldiers moving in single file at each side of the road. They were coming from the direction of Dripsey. Just at this time the Column O/C (John J. O'Leary) made his appearance and I reported what I had seen. Fire was opened on our position immediately by the men on the road, and we replied. As it was now apparent that the enemy were aware of our position, the order to withdraw was given. The whole column now retired from our trench cover and moved to our rear in a northerly direction.

After crossing the first fence to our rear, we were surprised by a party of military in the adjoining fields and had to change the direction of our withdrawal. We now moved west across a ploughed field, where we came under fire from the enemy. Four of our men (Tadhg McCarthy, Denis Murphy, Jim Barrett, and Patk. O'Mahoney) were wounded while crossing this field and were taken prisoners. When I crossed the fence running north to south at the western end of the ploughed field, I got into a boreen. Bullets were flying about as I crossed the fence, so I took time to fire five rounds at the pursuing enemy forces. This slowed down their advance, so I crossed into the field at the opposite side of the boreen. I continued my withdrawal in a north westerly direction until I reached the vicinity of Coachford National School, where I made contact with the surviving members of the column.

We then continued our withdrawal until we reached Woodfield, where we had some tea. Later we proceeded to Rylane area, where we billeted. During my withdrawal, after crossing the boreen I picked up a wounded man (- Lucey) and carried him on my back until I made contact

with the others near Coachford School. I now learned that another member of the column - Tim Riordan - had been wounded. We remained in Rylane area on the night of January 28th, and next day the column moved on to Coolmona.

Arrangements were now made to transfer the wounded man - Tim Riordan - to Nadd area in Cork 11 Brigade. I was instructed to accompany him. We got a horse and trap from Patk. Looney to convey the wounded man to Nadd. The horse was driven by a local I.R.A. man - Tim O'Shea. We travelled by various by-roads to Nadd, which we reached safely and made the wounded man comfortable in his billet. I then arranged with the local M.O. (Dr. Riordan) to treat the wounded man. He travelled by a roundabout route to Nadd, where he extracted a bullet from the wound in Tim Riordan's thigh. I remained in Nadd district for two days attending to the wounded man. Dan Goggin, a First Aid man, stayed also. We both rejoined the column at Coolmona about February 1st 1921.

During the engagement at Dripsey, seven of our men were taken prisoners, viz. Patk. O'Mahoney, John Lyons, Dan O'Callaghan, Denis Murphy, Tadhg McCarthy, Tom O'Brien, and Jim Barrett. Denis Murphy and Jim Barrett were seriously wounded. The latter died of wounds while a prisoner. The others, with the exception of Denis Murphy, were later tried by courtmartial by the British. They were found guilty of levying war, were sentenced to death and executed about the end of February, 1921. Denis Murphy was not tried at the same time, as he was too ill - due to his wounds - to stand his trial. When he was tried later, the Truce negotiations were taking place and he was sentenced to a term of penal servitude.

On February 20th 1921, Mrs. Lindsay, a British loyalist who was alleged to have informed the British of the preparations for the Dripsey ambush, and her chauffeur were taken prisoners by the Battalion O/C (John J. O'Leary) and some other officers. They were transferred to Goulane, Donoughmore, where they were held for several days under a heavy guard supplied by my company (Donoughmore). At this stage, we got suspicious of the owner of the house when we learned that he had posted a letter in Donoughmore where he had gone to attend a funeral. We raided the Post Office before the mails were dispatched and recovered the letter, which was addressed to his solicitor in Cork City. There was no disclosure in it relative to Mrs. Lindsay and her man (Clarke), but it was deemed safer to move the prisoners to a new place of detention. They were now escorted into Rylane Company area, where they were detained until they were executed. I have no knowledge of the circumstances in which the prisoners were executed.

When the funeral of Jim Barrett (Battalion Q/M), who died of wounds following Dripsey ambush, arrived in the area about the end of February, 1921, the Battalion O/C (John J. O'Leary) issued an order that all shops should close during the burial in Donoughmore. As O/C Donoughmore Company, I was responsible for seeing that the orders were carried out. One publichouse in the village opened during the funeral and admitted customers. I reported the matter at the next meeting of the Company Council and asked for instructions as to the action to be taken. When I was forcing the matter, I was threatened with courtmartial by the Battalion O/C (John J. O'Leary). As a result of the attitude adopted, I resigned my position as O/C and returned to the rank and file. The officers

of Donoughmore Company now were: -

O/C - Dan McCarthy
 1st Lt. - Maurice Brew
 2nd Lt. - Paddy Murphy.

I continued to serve as a member of Donoughmore Company and carried out all orders issued to me. I took part in the various activities of the company, such as blocking roads, demolishing bridges, making dumps and dug-outs. I served with the column up to the Truce.

The officers of Donoughmore Company in the period 1915 - 1921 were: -

1915 - 1919.

O/C - Jack Manning (witness)
 1st Lt. - Joe Collins (left area Nov. 1919)
 2nd Lt. - Jerh. Scanlon.

November, 1919.

O/C - Jack Manning (witness) (arrested Apl. 1920)
 1st Lt. - Paddy Collins
 2nd Lt. - Maurice Brew.

April, 1920.

O/C - Paddy Collins (apptd. Batt. Q/M & later
 Batt. Adjutant)
 1st Lt. - Dan McCarthy
 2nd Lt. - Maurice Brew.

June, 1920.

O/C - Jack Manning (witness) (Resumed duty after
 release from Wormwood
 Scrubbs).
 1st Lt. - Dan McCarthy.
 2nd Lt. - Maurice Brew.

April, 1921.

O/C - Dan McCarthy
 1st Lt. - Maurice Brew.
 2nd Lt. - Paddy Murphy.

Rank at the Truce - member of Donoughmore Battalion
Column. Strength of the column - about 30.

Signed: John Ganning

Date: 14th December 1954

Witness: P. Lonnell
(Investigator).

