

ROINN



COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

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Witness

Seán Farrelly,  
Scurlogstown,  
Trim,  
Co. Meath.

Identity.

Vice-Commandant,  
Meath Brigade.

Subject.

Carnaross Company, 5th Battalion, Meath Brigade,  
I.R.A. 1917 - 11th July, 1921.

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STATEMENT BY SEÁN FARRELLY,  
Scurloestown, Trim, County Meath.

Part II.

In a very short time after the surrender of Easter Week, followed by the executions and deportations, a great change was noticeable in the Irish people. Locally the country lads who heretofore passed us with a sneer, were now inclined to discuss the future of our country with us. We did not take matters lying down but kept together as a unit. For the three years before Easter Week, my old home in Carnaross had been used as the Headquarters of the local Volunteers and was referred to by the R.I.C. and Hibernians as "Liberty Hall". We now thought it advisable to have a new Headquarters as we thought it would not be fair to those who might now be prepared to join us or the Sinn Féin movement, to ask them to meet at "Liberty Hall" with its reputation among our enemies as a communist cell, so we rented a house in the village from Ned Farrelly. It became a meeting place for the local Volunteers and the Sinn Féin club.

By the end of 1916, we had started Irish step and figure dancing classes in the National School as well as classes in the Irish Language. We engaged Jack Dardis as our Teacher. The classes were held in the evenings and attracted the youth of the parish. Similar classes had been held before in the parish in Brian O'Higgin's young days and many of the boys had a fair knowledge of the Gaelic Language, with the result that we were able in a short time to organise Gaelic classes in

surrounding parishes. It was under the cover of those classes that sections of the Volunteers were first started in every parish adjoining Carnaross. I cannot recall where some of the Volunteers were sent, but I was sent to Mahera and Mullagh. In those two places I discovered they could teach me both the Gaelic dancing and Gaelic language. I did, however, teach the new recruits to the Volunteers in each place how to 'form fours'. As there were very few bicycles in those days, I had to travel to both places on foot: for that reason I preferred Mullagh which was nearer home. In Mullagh the classes were held in the tailor Reilly's loft. At each dance we had a crowded loft and a strong Company of Volunteers. Dan Lynch of Newcastle attended each night with his bagpipes, so we had good loud music. When the dance was over, he took complete charge of the Gaelic Language class. They are erecting monuments today to patriots, but I don't believe there was ever a more sincere patriot, a harder worker or a better Gael than poor Dan. God rest him! He passed away without one word of appreciation.

It was hard on the Mullagh people to look with favour on our movement. It must have been the most pro-British town in Ireland. Mr. T. P. McKenna was then the leading light of the place. In his pro-British spirit of the time he was associated with a committee set up for the purpose of "Helping plucky little Belgium". He got over a number of refugees from there and housed them in a villa in Mullagh. Sports meetings and regattas were run to make money for them. I mention those things to show the former spirit of a town that was now becoming one of the most Republican towns in the County Cavan.

By early 1917, we had the nucleus of a little Company of Volunteers formed in every town and village around Carnaross. Then came the

general release from Frongoch and elsewhere. I won't attempt to describe the jubilation exhibited in every quarter of the country as the prisoners returned under the leadership of their senior surviving officer, Ramon de Valera. Up to this he was not much in the limelight. I don't remember having heard his name previously, but, now that he led our prisoners home, he was hailed and accepted as our new leader. By then Count Plunkett had won a bye election in County Roscommon for Sinn Féin. This victory was followed by the election of Professor McGuinness in County Longford in the month of May at another bye election. This victory for Sinn Féin in the political arena was a good filip to our cause and it made lukewarm Irishmen pause to consider their position in regard to their duty to their country.

The first anniversary of Easter Week had come, so we of the Carnaross Company decided to celebrate the event with a victory march. Arrangements were made with the Parish Priest, Father Farrell, to have a special Mass offered for our dead leaders. We paraded at "Liberty Hall", and, led by the Drumbaragh bagpipes with Sean Dardis in kilts carrying the tricolour, proceeded to the Church. We had not proceeded very far when we met six of the local R.I.C. who tried to break up our march. We were ordered by our Chairman, Phil Tevlin, to form two lines on each side of the band to protect the bandmen. After a considerable amount of jostling with the police they gave up the attempt to break up the march. We re-formed and continued to our reserved place in the Church. During the melee a number of civilians came on the scene, whether to "sightsee" or to take action I do not know. It is evident, however, that their arrival in such numbers helped the police to decide that discretion was the better part of valour.

I was getting on in the world now and was the owner of a bicycle, purchased from Woulfe & Woulfe's of John Street, Kells, for the exorbitant sum of three half-crowns. I remember all this because my very first run was to Dublin to attend the funeral of Thomas Ashe. A good number of the Carnaross Company attended. We arrived just in time for the parade and after some manoeuvring were sent down a back street. The funeral was so large that we had not marched one hundred paces when we got the order to halt. By then the day was well spent. When we got the order to dismiss, it was so late that all we could do was to start the homeward journey without any refreshments whatever. I won't forget the experience. I rode the fifty miles to Dublin, paraded all day with my colleagues and rode the fifty miles back. I slept most of the way back and it was only when my lamp rattled that I woke with a start. As we approached Kells we were worn out completely and the smell of apples brought us to a sudden halt. We crossed into a garden and found a great heap of apples under some straw. The owner told us we could eat our fill but pocket none. I am sure that he got a surprise next morning when he saw the number of cores strewn about. It settled our hunger for that day.

For the next few months we settled down to routine drilling. During the period the Company officers were elected. Phil Tevlin became Captain, Fernie Dunne - 1st Lieutenant, my brother Pat Farrelly - 2nd Lieutenant and Brian Daly - Quartermaster. Eamon de Valera had been elected for East Clare in the month of July, and William T. Cosgrave for Kilkenny in the month of August.

In early 1918, we had the outcry by the British for conscription for Ireland. The Irish Parliamentary Party were not altogether in favour of it and had sense enough to see that such an imposition would

not help their party. Of course they were wholeheartedly in favour of voluntary service and continued their recruiting campaign with the greatest energy and were responsible for getting thousands of young Irishmen to enlist in the British Army. At the first mention of conscription the Irish people came together as one man. The clergy came forward at once. Their method of averting the misfortune was money. Conscription funds were opened in every parish and thousands of pounds were subscribed. Anti-conscription meetings were held at every crossroads. Speakers from Dublin such as Darrel Figgis, Maud Gonne MacBride, Countess Markievicz, Sean Milroy and Father O'Flanagan, together with our own local orators, addressed the meetings. All over the County Meath new recruits joined the ranks of the Volunteers. In Carnaross our strength went up to sixty. Many of those who presented themselves went away rather than take the usual Oath. Of course there was no place in our army for periodic soldiers at the time and once a man took the Oath he was expected to continue until the fight was over. At one anti-conscription meeting in Ballieboro' addressed by Father O'Flanagan there were several hundred Volunteers and thousands of civilians. It was one of the biggest meetings I ever saw. Father O'Flanagan was a great speaker and could address his audience easily for an hour.

Now that so many of our old friends in the Ancient Order of Hibernians had turned to us for protection during this period we decided to seek the use of their hall for a dance once again. This time we were successful. Although we got the hall we did not get the good will of the old retainers of the A.O.H., but we decided to let them see that the hall was going to be ours for the one night anyway.

A fairly large flag, the tricolour, was procured which we decided to hoist over the building. No ladder could be found so I was selected to climb on to the roof to do the hoisting. When I got back to earth things looked a bit rough. The staunch supporters of the A.O.H. were inclined to get tough. Our strength was such, however, we knew they could not afford to do so. During the following week I received a letter from the A.O.H. Secretary asking me to attend a meeting on a certain date to explain my hostile action on the night of the dance and show cause why I should not be expelled from membership of the club. My reply is better omitted from this statement. I was duly notified that I was expelled from the Society as from the night of the dance.

We were now marching and drilling in the open again and with the influx of all the new recruits we re-employed our old drill instructors, Feeney and Tyrrell. Our parade ground was in Pat Mulvaney's field and the R.I.C. were again taking up duty to watch us. On one occasion in the presence of an old R.I.C. man named Connor we had target practice with revolvers while he stood close by. He was one of the R.I.C. men who questioned us after Easter Week, 1916. He never came near the parade ground after this incident.

In June or July of this year we had the East Cavan bye election which proved another success for Sinn Féin, the candidates being Arthur Griffith for Sinn Féin and J. H. O'Hanlon for the Irish Parliamentary Party. During the campaign Mr. de Valera addressed a very large meeting in Rallieboro'. This was a very hostile area where the Hibernians and members of the Orange order combined to heckle the speakers, but all the Volunteers in North Meath, including the Carnaross Company, had been ordered to protect the speakers during the

election campaign so the meeting passed off without incident. On their way back from this meeting my brother Pat and Phil Tevlin were held up by two policemen and questioned for having no lights on their bicycles. When the policeman came with the summons we chased him with pitchforks. Of course Pat did not appear in Court but he was fined half-a-crown. Our old house in Clonagrouna was subsequently raided twice and sometimes thrice weekly to collect the half-crown, but Pat would not pay it.

Around this time Berney Reilly, with the help of Hugh Smyth, Editor of the Meath Chronicle, Paddy Bourke and Jack Hayes of the Chronicle Staff, started to organise another Volunteer Company in the parish in opposition to the recognised Company. About four or five of our members, including the two Lynches and two Dalys, joined the new Company. After a while they started a fife and drum band and engaged a man named Farnen from Breakey as band-master. They then had a banner painted at a cost of £25. After a short while the new Company broke up and the Lynches and Dalys returned to their old Company.

At the general election in December, 1918, Liam Mellows was the Sinn Féin candidate in County Meath. He was opposed by Doctor Cusack for the Irish Parliamentary Party. By then the R.I.C. had little or no control and the Volunteers everywhere took charge and supported and protected the speakers for the Sinn Féin candidate. To judge from the crowds attending each party's meetings it would seem that either of the candidates could win. On polling day we had a busy time. Dr. Cusack's personating agents were intimidated and had to leave almost every polling booth, leaving us a free hand. I never put in a busier day. From morning till night I voted in every booth and wound up in a booth at Springville where I voted in



the name of a man named J. H. Nicholson. However it came about, Sinn Féin had won the General Election and the people wanted an Irish Republic and from now on our army would be the army of the Republic.

Throughout the year 1919 drilling was intensified and in the month of November the I.R.A. attacked Ballivor and Dillons Bridge R.I.C. barracks. At Ballivor they succeeded in capturing the barracks and a number of arms and some ammunition. Within a short period of about six months at least twenty police barracks were evacuated in the County Meath. Within a week of the evacuation of Carnaross barracks we had it burned to the ground. No sooner had the R.I.C. left the barracks in Crossakiel than the local Company burned it down also. It was the same story with each of the other evacuated barracks in the county. To the best of my knowledge all of this work was carried out by the I.R.B. For years past the I.R.B. (a secret organisation) was in existence and controlled and directed the Irish Volunteers. I was not a member but my two brothers Pat and Philip were. They held their local meetings at Drumbaragh. At the time we had a white pony which they always yoked to take them there. It became known locally as the Sinn Féin pony. During the year 1919 and 1920 the Sinn Féin pony was constantly on the road and after the General Election the I.R.B. meetings were held more regularly with the result that the white pony was often seen on the road which gave rise to a local rumour that there was going to be another rising. In the burning of the evacuated barracks Philip appeared to take a leading part. He always wore a disguise in the shape of a rug twisted around his head while on these jobs. The burning of Moynalty, Mullagh, Fordstown and Balnagow barracks followed the burning of Crossakiel barracks. There were so many barracks burned that our boys were quite efficient at the job. It was found that patrol by itself was no use. It would just go off in a flame without

lighting the material. Paraffin was the stuff to get them going. It was just dabbed on the floors, then sprinkled with a little petrol and very soon after being ignited we were assured of a complete job.

Our next big job was the collection and raids for arms in civilian hands. This was 'a go as you please' business and was spread over a long period. The idea appears to have been that the guns would not be as safe in other hands as in ours. In any case the big landowners, Loyalists and Unionists were seen to first. One of the first places we raided was the residence of three Protestant girls named Rowley who lived in a big house known as Sylvan Park House. They were a great loyalist family. As our boys reached the main door they knocked and demanded admittance. The three women within immediately opened fire from different positions and succeeded in beating off the raiders. Sylvan Park House was quite convenient to Balrath big house where there was a strong garrison of enemy soldiers and it was possible that the shooting could be heard there so it was decided to retreat and try another time. Philip had taken cover behind a cock of hay on the lawn in front of the building and it was with difficulty he succeeded in getting away without being riddled with rifle bullets which were cutting the grass around him.

We had more success in our next raid. This time it was on the house of a Mr. Archdale who was married to a Miss Rowley of Sylvan Park House. He was a Captain in the Ulster Volunteers and drilled the Orangemen at Loughan. There were ten of us told off for this job. We left the parade ground and proceeded to the house on bicycles. On the way my bicycle got a puncture so I left it in a ditch and proceeded on foot. In the darkness I was not missed and found myself isolated. When our men sought admittance they were answered by a hail of gunfire and it was through this blizzard that I dodged my way from tree to tree

to the hall door where all our men were huddled underneath the porch. It did not take us long to force the door. We had previously been informed by a maid working in the house that the only lock on the door was a Yale. We were now in the house and at once set about getting to the parapet from where the fire was directed. With guns drawn we got around the first bend in the stairs. Here two of our men covered the next bend until another two of our men got there. Eventually we reached the room from whence the attack originated. What a sight met our eyes. The old lady with four young women and boys were busily sorting ammunition from a number of boxes with which the floor was strewn. They were loading rifles and handing them to Mr. Archdale who was perched on the parapet shooting away for all he was worth. As we entered the room we shouted "Hands up!" We pulled Mr. Archdale off his perch by the tail of his nightshirt. I never saw such surprise and consternation on the faces of human beings before. We marched Mr. Archdale from room to room with his hands up until we collected every gun and every round of ammunition in the house. We were well rewarded. We got several rifles and a great quantity of ammunition the property of the Orangemen. We also got what I have never seen since or before - a repeating shotgun capable of holding eight cartridges at a time. I was very fond of the weapon and kept it carefully dumped in a cock of hay at Fegatt. It was discovered by a man named Brady who was stealing hay one morning. He reported the matter to the military and they collected it. There were one or two similar incidents to that of the Miss Rowleys and Mr. Archdale, but in the main all shotguns in the area were handed over voluntarily.

Following our raids for arms the R.I.C., supported by Black & Tans, in turn raided the homes of all known Volunteers. They were led by a

Sergeant Brady, who was one of the R.I.C. caught at Ashbourne in 1916. He had the reputation of being insane since that incident and had a very evil appearance. This was the Sergeant who led the raids on my old home in Clonagrouna sometimes twice or three times a week. On one occasion when we refused to open the <sup>front</sup> door after his cry "Open in the name of the King!" he returned to a lorry on the roadside and brought back a couple of sledges and iron bars. With these they burst the door open and then swarmed all over the house. We were always careful with our arms and kept them carefully dumped so they found nothing. There was another occasion, however, when I was in bed with flu, when a raid took place. At the time I had 500 rounds of .303 ammunition in a haversack hanging on the end of the bed. After searching the rest of the house, the R.I.C., led by Connor - one of the worst scoundrels of the lot, opened my door and flashed a torch in my face. He said, "Jack, I am very sorry to see you so sick". He turned to the others and said "Go back lads, there is no one here only poor Jack". Similar raids were made on the homes of the Tevlins, Dunnes and other I.R.A. men throughout the whole period. One of Sergeant Brady's favourite stunts on Sundays was to go through the crowd as they stood outside the Church after Mass. With a long Webley drawn he would peer into each man's face with an evil leer.

By summer of 1920, the Republican Law Courts had been set up and were kept fairly busy settling little disputes that might crop up from time to time among neighbours. The English Law Courts had almost ceased to function. The local Volunteers did all the police work for the Republican Courts and were kept very busy. Great precaution had to be taken lest the enemy would find out where they were being held. If such a thing happened it would have disastrous results, especially with so many civilians present. On one occasion arrangements had been

made to hold the Court at Rathendrick Hall and all those interested were notified about a week previously; but on the night of the sitting a Volunteer was posted at the hall to direct everyone to Woodpoole hall. This move was necessary lest during the week the enemy, from one source or another, became aware of the venue. The sudden change shortened the time at the disposal of a spy to inform the enemy and lessened the chance of a raid by enemy forces. On this particular night, however, I was notified for guard duty at Rathendrick Hall. When I got there on my bicycle I ran into a group of military surrounding the building. I was armed with a revolver and had no light on my bicycle. In the darkness I fell into the arms of a soldier with a tin hat on his head and a rifle in his hand. "Tommy", said I, "that was a near thing, only you caught me I would have run into the ditch". He replied. "You might indeed Paddy, a little leap would be very useful in the dark". I agreed with him and spent a few seconds trying to make conversation with him. I moved off as nicely as I could without further incident and arrived in Woodpoole Hall before the proceedings commenced. We held the Court there that night, while the military kept guard on the empty hall at Rathendrick two miles away.

It was around this time that the military began to participate in the raids. At first they were accompanied by the local R.I.C., but later raided on their own. The absence of a raiding party on my old home at Clonagrouney for a month was considered a fair respite. After one such lull we had our first all-military raid. They started their search just as it got dark. The whole force rushed from room to room without any semblance of order. As they had only one flash lamp they thronged into each room in a bunch. In one room they found

a packet of twenty-four candles and proceeded to light them, but my mother jumped out of bed saying, "Look at the blackguards with my candles". She grabbed each one of them before they realised what she was doing. After this encounter they cleared out.

In the summer of 1920, six battalions were formed in County Meath and a short time later a Brigade Staff was appointed. Our Battalion became the 5th Battalion, Meath Brigade. The Companies comprising the 5th Battalion were Carnaross, Oldcastle, Stonefield and Ballinlough. Seamus Cogan, Captain of Stonefield, was appointed Battalion O/C; Sean Keogh, Vice O/C; Peter O'Higgins, Adjutant, and Barney Harte, Quartermaster. Later with the formation of new Companies in Ballinacree, Moylough and Whitegate, the battalion strength was increased.

With the withdrawal of the R.I.C. from the small barracks all over the county and the state of turmoil in the country at the time, gangs of blackguards got together here and there all over the county to loot, rob and work their will on the people. One such gang calling themselves "The Black Hand Gang" operated in the Newcastle and Tierworker areas. It was composed of men from every organisation in the districts including the A.O.H., Sinn Fein, ex-British soldiers and even members of the I.R.A. Their aim was to get established on the land by brutally hunting people from their homes. Composed as they were, it can be seen how dangerous an organisation it was and how hard it was to track them down. When outrages committed by them were being investigated by the I.R.A. it was quite easy for their touts to pass on the news and they would make their arrangements accordingly. Their activities included the wounding of people with shotguns, shooting into houses as well as robberies. In one case they placed a land-mine in a labourer's cottage and blew it to bits.

My brother Pat and other I.R.A. men took the matter up. They visited the area after the home of a man named Stephen Clarke had been fired into. Pat interviewed several men reputed to be connected with the gang and warned them of the consequences if a similar incident happened again, but the depredation continued. In another case a farm hand working for a Mr. Rowntree was black-listed by the gang. They called to Rowntree's and when they saw a man leaving a loft with a bucket of oats they opened fire with a shotgun and seriously wounded him. It was Mr. Rowntree himself. It would fill pages to recount all the atrocious crimes committed and all the farms of land they laid claim to, including the farm of a Phil Smyth of Cool. They boycotted the place and would not let anyone enter the lands.

Unfortunately a young fellow named Clinton was foolish enough to enter the lands with a pair of horses to plough a field. He had not proceeded far when a shot, fired from a concealed position, dropped one of the horses. While the young fellow stood in dismay another shot killed the second horse. He started to run for shelter but before he could reach a ditch he too was shot dead. This was a shocking tragedy and brought things to a head and the I.R.A. made an all-out drive to get to the bottom of it. It fell to the local Captain in Newcastle - Michael Cahill - to investigate the affair. He was unsuccessful. The Battalion Commandant, Tommy O'Reilly and every man in the Battalion then got on the job but still things were unsuccessful. Sean Boylan, Brigade O/C., then appointed Pat to take charge of the investigation. He and Phil Tevlin did trojan work. It was a long, tedious undertaking. No one in the area would give information and many of those who could were, apparently, afraid to do so. It was as a result of information supplied by a Tom Tevlin

and Stephen Clarke (whose house had been fired into) that we were able to make a start. Eventually Pat and his men located the gang in George Cartland's public house in Bailieboro' one day. They were located in a room off the bar and Pat actually overheard them plotting to drive a man named Patrick Carolan off his farm.

One of the gang, a man known as "The Rabbit" Carolan" saw Pat and closed the door of the room: he knew he had been detected and went on the run there and then and did not return until the whole affair was over. He died a few years ago and that ill-informed journal "The Meath Chronicle" devoted a whole column in singing his praises as a great I.R.A. patriot of Tierworker. We now knew their leaders and a great number of the rank and file and had a lot of material to go on as evidence. It was decided that the leaders only would be dealt with.

Sean Boylan, Brigade O/C., procured a lorry and with a number of the South Meath I.R.A. as a bodyguard, including Joe Lawlor and Paddy Mooney of Trim, arrived at the Cross of Cormeen. They remained in the lorry while we proceeded to round up the gang. We collected seven or eight of them the first night, including Bryan Finnegan - an I.R.A. man. He was the greatest daredevil I ever met. He had helped in the burning of Mullagh barracks some weeks before and was caught by the flames upstairs and had to leap from a top window into the street. We found him in his little house fully armed with a rifle. He threatened to shoot anyone who came near and we knew he was capable of doing so and meant to do what he said. He was captured, however, after a hole was bored in the back of the house. He struggled violently but Pat managed to get a chain around his body. He then gave in and we marched him to the lorry. We did not get all of them that night. We could not find the "Rabbit Carolan" or the ex-British soldier named Gordon who actually killed Clinton. A further three of



the gang were arrested a couple of nights later. All the prisoners were taken to Bolthorn House which was unoccupied at the time. Here they were guarded night and day for about a week until being transferred to another Company area.

After some time Gordon was arrested in the town of Navan and taken to the Dunboyne Company area where the other prisoners were then detained. All were tried by an I.R.A. military Court. Gordon was sentenced to death and duly executed. The others were deported from the North Wall and Drogheda. They have not been seen in the country since. When all was over the "Rabbit" whom we could not ~~see~~ return to the area. The job was carried out so successfully that my brother Pat was appointed Commandant with a roving commission which meant that any job of importance to be carried out in the area was entrusted to him.

Around this time a young fellow named Farrelly stole a bullock from one of his neighbours. Seamus Cogan, the Battalion O/C., with a squad of I.R.A., arrested him and were taking him to an "Unknown destination" to await his trial. Before they reached their destination they were surprised by a group of Military and R.I.C. men. They opened fire on our men and a running fight ensued in which Commandant Cogan was shot dead. The prisoner was taken to safety and detained by the I.R.A. Poor Cogan's body was thrown into a lorry and taken to Kells R.I.C. barracks. After the inquest the remains were surrendered to his relatives and taken for burial to a new Republican plot in the cemetery at Ballinlough. The funeral from Kells was of huge dimensions. Thousands of the Republican Army marched with the funeral. While an I.R.A. man named Bryan Barden of Oldcastle was guarding the prisoner Farrelly one day, he was surprised, wounded and captured by the R.I.C. while the prisoner escaped.

Following this incident Farrelly was willing to do anything he could for the I.R.A. He never forgave himself for all the trouble he had caused.

One day Bernie Dunne, now our Company Captain, and Phil Tevlin were on their way to Kells riding their bicycles. As a lorry load of Tans passed them on the road they opened fire and Bernie fell wounded. He was taken to a neighbour's house and from there to the Richmond Hospital, Dublin. His wound was not too serious and he was soon discharged. He was not seen in the country again for many years. A short time after the wounding of Bernie I got a very neat little note by post, purporting to be from the Tans. It informed me that I was next on the list for shooting and that I would get it before I was much older. I reported the matter that evening to our Captain, Phil Tevlin, while on parade. He took a serious view of the matter and advised me to show the note to the Parish Priest, Father Kelly who had replaced Father Farrell. I protested saying it would do no good. However, I did go to him. When I showed him the note, he went into a hot rage and called me a blackguard, telling me to go home and behave myself and no one would shoot me. After this I got myself well armed and carried two loaded revolvers by day and put them under my pillow by night. With the foolishness of youth I thought they were going to keep me safe. Of course it was possible that if I were attacked by the Tans I might be able to take down one or two of them, but what loss would the life of a Tan be to the British Army of occupation. When my brother, Father Kieran Farrelly, of the Passionist Order, heard of the note, he wrote to me giving me his advice and enclosing a sacred relic which I was to carry on my person. I considered it a very kind, holy and thoughtful gesture and after my encounter with Father Kelly, I felt very consoled. However, I did not consider myself good enough to retain the relic, so I returned it and contented myself with the two guns.

All this time the Military, Tans and R.I.C. continued to maraud the country-side. Driving along the peaceful country roads, through sheer blackguardism, they shot a horse, cow or sheep grazing in a field as it took their fancy. At length an order came to try and put a stop to their joy-riding. It was an order to demolish all road bridges in the Battalion area. This was a very tough job for our boys who did not understand it. It was now found out, however, that if the keystone was loosened and removed, it was easy to demolish the remainder; but the job had to be done at night and it was not easy to find that keystone. Invariably when the enemy came to a broken bridge they forced the young men of the neighbourhood to erect a temporary structure to enable them to cross. The R.I.C. knew every loyalist in the area so they were seldom commandeered for the job. After a while the tables were turned on those gentry. It was a bit tough for our men to spend the night breaking a bridge or trenching a road and perhaps spend the next day at the point of a Tan's revolver repairing the bridge or filling in the trench, so we decided to get the loyalists and all of our neighbours who were opposed to our methods to do the job for us. When one or two armed I.R.A. men had rounded them up with their picks and shovels, they were shown what to do and how to do it. I can assure you there was no slacking on the job. They would work like demons to get the work finished, so as to be back in their homes before the enemy would arrive. The demolition of the bridges was the breaking of Father Kelly's heart. One of the first to be broken was the barrack bridge at Carnaross. He was furious and remarked to one of his parishioners that it was the Farrelly's of Clonagrouney who broke it.

Notwithstanding all the guns we gathered we were still insufficiently armed. We could not retain the guns we had gathered,

or captured in a raid as they were usually distributed elsewhere in the Brigade area for an attack on an enemy patrol or barracks outside our Battalion area. Following the attack on Ballinacorney and Millons Bridge barracks, the next big job brought off in the county was the capture of Trim R.I.C. barracks in September of 1920. This was a very successful job, which resulted in the capture of all arms and ammunition in the barracks and the subsequent burning down of the building. At the time there was a strong military garrison in Dunshaughlin, a Military garrison and Black & Tan garrison in each of the towns of Favan, Kells, Oldcastle and Whitewood, and it was necessary that every precaution be taken to prevent reinforcements from those places reaching Trim while the job was being carried out.

All roads leading from those garrison towns, as well as roads leading from garrison towns elsewhere, had to be blocked and I.R.A. squads placed on them in preparation for an attack on any reinforcements likely to come from any quarter. Big trees were felled across all the roads leading to Trim and where possible one was felled from one side against another from the opposite side. While all this was being done reliable armed I.R.A. took up ambush positions to guard the men on the work and prevent surprise by enemy forces. As it turned out only one shot had to be fired and that one killed the District Inspector of the R.I.C. in charge, while the actual raid was taking place on the barracks. There was some assistance from inside and it appears that the sentry was a bit lax; but when the boys got past him it was comparatively easy. The job was carried out with the utmost dispatch.

The capture of this barracks was such a blow to the enemy that they carried out reprisals to the fullest extent. They burned down

several houses in the town and placed explosives in others and blew them to bits. Among those destroyed were the Lawlor's and Higgins's who were supporters of ours. Higgins's was a public-house. A branch of the Hibernian Bank now occupies the site.

It was around this time that our Intelligence Staff received information that a Mr. Radcliff of Hurdlestown was training a squad of Orangemen in the use of arms at his place in Hurdlestown, and that his house was well fortified. It was located in a very dangerous position near the garrisoned town of Kells. We knew that a raid on the place would not be easy. After much deliberation it was arranged that some of our men should contact a maid employed at the house to obtain some information about the layout of the different rooms, but nothing came of it, so we decided to try a ruse. Accordingly, on the appointed night when we all had assembled at the big gate leading to the house we advanced as near as possible to the hall door where we halted while one of our men advanced and rang the bell. He was to explain that a lorry he was driving had run out of petrol and was to ask for a quantity to take him as far as Kells.

In answer to the ring, the door was opened by Mr. Radcliff himself. The door was on a chain and before our man had time to explain his business, it was slammed in his face and bolted. With that we approached a side window, smashed it and entered. In the hall ten of our heftiest men, armed with revolvers, confronted Mr. Radcliff, and one of the group explained our business. Mr. Radcliff was told we had no desire to upset his house or his people in anyway and was asked to hand over all arms and ammunition in his possession at once and we would take our departure. He replied "Robbers! Robbers!" We went to great trouble explaining to him that we were

no such thing and that we were I.R.A. on duty. We then made a final appeal to him to co-operate and thus save us the trouble of upsetting his household. He protested saying that there were no arms in the house. We told him his refusal to assist only compelled us to make a search. With that all of our men, except myself, went upstairs in search of the arms, while I stood guard over Mr. Radcliff. He turned to rejoin his friends in the sitting room. It appeared to be full of people. I put my hand gently on his arm, saying, "I am sorry Sir, my orders are to keep you here; you must not leave the hall". He grumbled about the treatment he was receiving and I explained that the fault was his own, and that if he would now agree to hand over the arms I would call our men down. He again turned towards the sitting room saying he felt weak. I again restrained him and called on Mrs. Radcliff to fetch a chair. She hastened to comply, but before she arrived with the chair, he fell dead into my arms. No sooner had he fallen than all our men came thronging down the stairs, everyone of them loaded with guns. They threw them outside and returned to the hall to see what help they could give. We did everything we could. We opened his collar and the neck of his shirt and with a spoon poured some whiskey down his throat. We then carried him outside and tried artificial respiration, but he was dead and we could do nothing about it. We did send for a doctor and clergyman. The whole affair took a very considerable time.

A good few of our men on the job were new recruits and possibly this was their first operation. By the time we sent for the Doctor most of them, including a few veterans, had cleared off, leaving all the guns behind them. However, I picked up three rifles, slung them over my shoulder and started the ~~ten~~ mile journey home on my bicycle. Four or five of the others who remained also picked up a rifle or

two and started for home. I arrived home safely with the three rifles and my brother Mick a few minutes later with another three.

Here we were with six darling rifles with the dawn just breaking and a man lying dead back in Murdlestown. We knew only too well that we had not long to wait until the Tans would arrive. Their first search was bound to be at our house. We got two spades and still carrying our rifles went to a potato field where we dug a hole between the drills and buried them deeply in the clay. We took off our coats and started digging the potatoes expecting to hear any minute the enemy lorries approach. That evening when we had finished we went to Featt for a sleep. No house was ever raided for those arms and the matter would have ended quietly, after the regrettable incident, but for the action of a prominent Sinn Féiner, named John Brennan of Kells. He was arrested about this time. When searched some Sinn Féin literature was found on him. After signing some undertaking or other for the enemy he was released after about seven days. The following week-end the "Meath Chronicle" published a letter from him stating that the raid on Murdlestown House was not carried out by the I.P.A., but by a band of ruffians without authority. It can be imagined how dismayed and aggrieved we were when we read it. He died a few years ago and that irresponsible scribe - Mr. Quilty of the "Meath Chronicle" devoted two columns of the paper to recording him as an unsung hero. In the interests of historical accuracy I wrote a letter to the "Meath Chronicle" contradicting Mr. Quilty's commentary as I thought it regrettable that such a man as Brennan should be described as "An unsung hero".

Income tax and rate collectors' offices in the battalion area were raided in about the month of September, 1920. All documents were collected, taken away and buried. The vast majority of the

National Archives Act, 1986, Regulations, 1988

**ABSTRACTION OF PART(S) PURSUANT TO REGULATION 8**

**Form to be completed and inserted in the original record  
in place of each part abstracted**

(i) Reference number of the separate cover under  
which the abstracted part has been filed:

WS 1734/13

(ii) How many documents have been abstracted:

1p

(iii) The date of each such document:

c. April 1958

(iv) The description of each document:

WS 1734 - Witness Statement Sean Fennelly p 23 .  
Names of individuals

(Where appropriate, a composite description may be entered in respect of two or more related documents).

(v) Reason(s) why the part has been abstracted for retention:

**(c) Would or might cause distress or danger to living persons on the ground that they contain information about individuals, or would or might be likely to lead to an action for damages for defamation.**

( These will be the reasons given on the certificate under Section 8(4).)

Moloney

Name: (J. Moloney.)

Grade: Col.

Department/Office/Court:

Date: 7 March 2003.



Councillors elected to Meath County Council in June of this year were elected on the Sinn Féin ticket and many of them were I.R.A. men. At their first meeting they ceased to acknowledge the authority of British Local Government and pledged their support for Irish Local Government under its newly appointed Minister, Mr. W.T. Cosgrave. From then on the entire Council went on the run and their meetings were held in private in different places throughout the Brigade area and even in Dublin City.

When things began to get very serious for the I.R.A. a great many of our earlier peace-time Volunteers, especially the officers, who very often displayed two guns on parade, slunk away into oblivion and were not heard of again until the Truce was signed. Among those were

Several sworn I.R.B. men also followed their example, when the order came to attack R.I.C. and Tan patrols or R.I.C. barracks. They just disappeared. Their attitude was taken very seriously by Paddy McDonnell, our Battalion I.O. and one of our most active officers. Paddy was a first-class soldier but was considered to be a little unbalanced. He held that all of the deserters should be shot. He visited some of them in their houses and lectured them for hours with a gun in his hand. During the conscription period Paddy McDonnell was a student in Maynooth College. At the time he tried to organise a Volunteer Company in the College to fight conscription openly, as he put it. His idea was that here in the College were hundreds of young men of military age and fitness whom the British wanted for their army. He maintained that if the British Authorities came to collect them like so many birds in a net

they should be ready to resist. His reasoning may have been sound enough, but the College Authorities thought otherwise and he was expelled.

The next episode brought an end to my military activities for several months. The administration of the local Sinn Féin Court continued throughout the year and my brother Mick, who was the Chief Clerk, was kept very busy. This particular night he was attending the Court as usual - it was the 20th October, 1920. My mother and I were the only two in the house. All the work of the day had been finished and we were having a quiet read when the stillness of the countryside was shattered by the roar of lorries. They appeared to be about two miles away. We both dropped our books and as quickly as possible went from room to room and collected all documents and papers, including those connected with the Courts, which might in any way be construed as incriminating and deposited them outside where they could not be found. We had about twenty minutes to do the job and we did it thoroughly. When I had deposited everything safely I returned to the house to assure my mother that everything was in order and told her that I would not leave until after the raid. I never saw my mother as scared over a raid before; she admitted she dreaded the Tans and asked me not to leave her. Of course I complied with her request. At this period the daily papers carried startling and fearful accounts of the atrocities of the Tans and the treatment they meted out to the parents and families of I.R.A. men whose homes they raided.

At this time an I.R.A. man was only arrested when a charge of some sort or another could be brought against him, such as the possession of arms or seditious documents on his person or in the

house raided. It was not an offence to be a Sinn Féiner and in the absence of evidence that a man was a member of the I.R.A. he was not arrested either. Now feeling fairly certain that there were no arms or seditious documents in the house that would warrant a charge against me, we both took up our books and continued our reading as if nothing was happening. But something was happening. The thud of marching men on the gravelled drive was heard as plain as heretofore. Then the military commands "Halt, reform two lines", followed by "Open in the name of the King", just as aggravating as usual. I promptly opened the door full width and looked out to see not the Tans we were expecting, but a most formidable force of military and two or three Sergeants of the R.I.C. As soon as I opened the door an officer carrying the rank of Lieutenant stepped forward and asked if I were John Farrelly. When I replied "Yes", he told me he was carrying out a raid on the house and asked me to accompany him. He motioned to one of the R.I.C. to accompany us. We travelled the whole house room after room. They searched everywhere diligently, but found nothing. Just as the Lieutenant was expressing some remarks about his failure to find anything, a burly R.I.C. Sergeant entered the sitting room and threw a copy of "Nationality" on the table saying "Look at what we found, Sir; we must take this man prisoner". The Lieutenant turned to me and said "Well, I believe Mr. Farrelly we must take you with us". "Nationality" was a little weekly paper sold openly over almost every news vendor's counter at the time. It expounded the Sinn Féin policy.

At the point of two revolvers in the hands of two R.I.C. Sergeants I was taken to the hall door and securely handcuffed to a little Tommy and then rushed into a waiting lorry, where I took my stand with about twenty armed soldiers with tin helmets.

It was a cold frosty night. The lorry was driven to Kells where I found myself in front of the R.I.C. barracks at the top of Cannon Street. I was taken inside and shoved into one of the cells, with a single brown blanket. Next morning I got my first meal as the guest of His Majesty The King. It consisted of a mug of tea and some bread and butter. After three nights in Kells barracks I was again handcuffed and put in a lorry and driven to the Workhouse in Dunshaughlin where I was put in a room with about a dozen soldiers awaiting courtmartial for desertion. On the way to Dunshaughlin I was beaten with the butts of rifles when I tried to stand up in the lorry to attract the attention of a neighbour of ours whom I saw on the roadside. My companions in the Workhouse were a filthy, motley crowd. Father Farrell, who had some time earlier been parish priest in Carnaross, was now P.P. in Dunshaughlin. When he heard I was in the Workhouse he came to see me. I explained to him that I was going to try and escape. He advised me not to do so. A few days later my companions told me they were going to try and escape and asked me if I would come with them. I agreed. That evening who should arrive in to see me but my brother, Father Kieran, accompanied by Father Farrell. I told them of the new move to escape but they advised me to let the matter drop. After 'lights out' that night my companions worked hard until they got the lock off a back door. When all was ready they approached me and offered me a soldier's uniform but I decided not to trust the blackguards and refused to go with them saying that there was no charge that could be possibly brought against me and that when my courtmartial would be held I was bound to be released. When they heard this they shook hands in turn and went off one at a time into the cold frosty night. I said a silent prayer for any unfortunate victim they might meet while at large. I had the room to myself now and settled down on my straw bed for the night.

In the morning after the reveille a soldier looked in and seeing only myself enquired where were the others. I replied "Wherever they are I never want to see their evil faces again" - they were the worst-looking bunch I ever met, especially one with cast eyes. Within a few minutes my room was full of officers and men enquiring of me where they had gone or how they got away as if I were their jailor. I knew full well that the ruffians, especially one with the devil's own appearance, had fully deserved whatever was coming to them, but nevertheless they had my sympathy. They were gone, but it was not for long. Next morning a lorry pulled up outside my door and disgorged all of them except the one with the crooked eyes. If ever there was a devil in shoe leather it was that crooked-eyed vagabond. When they got over their disappointment they told all they went through and how 'crooked eyes' had raided and robbed a little shop on the roadside.

After three weeks in Dunshaughlin, I was taken to Mountjoy jail, again in handcuffs, under a heavy armed guard. I was only a few days there when Kevin Barry was hung. There was complete quietness there that morning; the tramping of the warders became silent, and we were not disturbed for breakfast until after the bell rang announcing his death. We all joined in saying one Rosary after another until we were called for Mass. The gloom that hung over the place was surprising. After a fortnight I was taken to Arbour Hill barracks for courtmartial. Father Kieran was present. The Court was composed of three army officers. Of course I refused to recognise it. When I thought they were about to give a decision I said "I would like to ask the Lieutenant who arrested me one question". All hands looked up and waited expectantly. At last the President shouted "What is the question you are about to ask the officer?"

"It is this", I said, stroking a fine beard I had gathered since my arrest, "How do you like my whiskers?" The stillness and discipline of the gathering was shattered by Father Kieran's loud and hearty laugh. The President declared, "Remove the prisoner, sentence will be promulgated". When I got back to Mountjoy everything was as I had left it, except that next day and for the next few weeks my dinner was delivered to the gate of Mountjoy from a nearby hotel. Soon after Father Kieran paid me a visit and I told him about the dinners. He could not account for it and could only guess that a friend of his, a Mrs. Kennedy, was responsible.

About three weeks after my courtmartial, I was taken from my cell to have my photograph and fingerprints taken. When this was completed I was taken into a circular room where my crime and sentence were <sup>read</sup> out to me. My sentence was three months hard labour. I then got the order, "Right turn, quick march". I refused to stir. The warder who gave the order said, "Get a move on, you are a sentenced prisoner now and you are going to "A" wing for work". I replied, "I am not going to work". With that he got very angry and started to shout. Warders came from every direction and the place was in turmoil. Hundreds of prisoners crowded around the wire screens and shouted encouragement to me. After a considerable time the head warder came on the scene and quietly asked me if I refused to work. I assured him that I was determined not to do so and that I would not go to "A" wing. I demanded to be treated as a political prisoner in "D" wing. Eventually I got my way. After spending a few days in "C" wing I was transferred to "D" wing where all political prisoners were detained.

After a few days I got my whiskers nicely trimmed and looked like a Frenchman. The Cumann na mBan and relatives were allowed in to visit the prisoners, and I wanted to meet them at my best. There were three visiting boxes or cubicles constructed for the purpose and I had many a visitor during the period. Outside the war was continuing in all its savagery. After my arrest the Authorities issued a Proclamation declaring the I.R.A. an illegal organisation and as a result the I.R.A. were being arrested wholesale and interned without trial. Mountjoy became chock full. My brother, Philip, was arrested about this time and sent to a detention camp at Collinstown. One day I had two lady visitors from Dublin; they were members of the Cumann na mBan. Joe Kennedy of Castlepollard was serving a sentence in Mountjoy at the same time as myself, so I took him along to meet my visitors. They had been sent from Headquarters to ask me to study the special services classes organised by the prisoners in Mountjoy so that I could take command when released. But a bigger surprise was to come. A few days later I was informed that there was another visitor waiting for me in No. 2 visitor's cubicle. I discovered that another prisoner - John Keogh of Ballinlough who was our Battalion O/C before his arrest - was also to meet the visitor in my company. When we got down we were surprised to find our visitor was none other than the Brigade O/C., Seán Boylan.

He was in serious trouble over the state of our area and briefly told me the position and the many things that had happened in our Battalion area in particular. He wanted to get the area reorganised and put into shape. John Keogh, being an internee, Boylan knew he had no chance of release, so he warned me to lose no opportunity to get free when my term was up and to avoid being interned, if possible. I promised to do my best although I knew

that would be very little as each morning a lorry was waiting in the yard to take one or two of the prisoners to Ballykinlar internment camp immediately their sentence was served.

At last the day of my release arrived and I was all excitement. I kicked the door of my cell and the Warder came along. In the early stages I had some trouble with this warder as a result of which I threatened to report him to the Governor. He pleaded with me not to do so and promised me that if it lay in his power he would try and do me a good turn. This morning I told him I was tired of the place and was going home. "For God's sake", says he "do you know there is a lorry in the yard waiting to take you to Ballykinlar". I asked him what I could do about it. He reminded me of his promise to do me a good turn and said he was going to try and fulfil it now. He asked me to remain very quiet and to be ready to go the minute he called for me. Of course I agreed. He opened the door of Joe Kennedy's cell. I went in and sat on his plank chatting to Joe until I got the call. He came back at last and called on me to make haste. On the way he told me that if I were lucky I had a good chance, that there was no lorry there at the moment and the one that had been there had left. He ushered me into the office for my discharge. The official in the office handed me the few coppers found on me on arrival and was about to hand me my wages for the three months hard labour - it amounted to about four and sevenpence - when the warder intervened and said, "Farrelly refused to work". I could have kicked him. I was marched to the gate and released.

I was free at last. My old friends of the Cumann na mBan were outside to take charge of me with my big strong boots, darling whiskers and roughly tied bundle under my arm. They ushered me



across the street to J.J. Walshe's shop where I was received with open arms as if I were a hero. Father Kieran joined us later and joined in the celebrations. After having my photo taken I called on a Mrs. Johnson of 56, Blessington Street, to thank her for all the good things she sent into me while inside. I next had a shave and spent some time in the city sight seeing. Next day I bought a couple of dozen stout and took them into my old comrades inside. I had some difficulty in getting in this time but eventually succeeded. After three days in the city I took the train for home. My mother was there and gave me a hearty welcome and advised me to clear out as soon as I had some refreshments. She told me she had had five raids in the previous three days.

Next day I moved about my home in a wide circle. In the evening a dispatch arrived for me. I was ordered to be in Ballinlough that night at a given time. When I got to the appointed place a young man bade me goodnight and told me he was to be my guide, and asked me to follow him. Off we went up John Keogh's avenue around the house and down into the fields where I saw a lone man standing under a lone bush. He was my Brigade Commandant, Seán Boylan. He spoke curtly to me and said, "You came". He asked me how far I was prepared to go with the fight. I answered him thoughtfully and sincerely saying "All the way" or words to that effect. He asked me would I join the I.R.B. I confessed I did not know much about it. He told me I would have to take an oath, would have to obey orders and be a good soldier generally. I agreed to those terms and there and then under that lone bush I swore I would fight to defend the Irish Republic against all enemies foreign and domestic. It was an oath something similar to that taken by the I.R.A. Before we parted he informed me that there was a battalion council meeting being held next evening at Ballinlough and asked me to attend.

National Archives Act, 1986, Regulations, 1988

**ABSTRACTION OF PART(S) PURSUANT TO REGULATION 8**

**Form to be completed and inserted in the original record  
in place of each part abstracted**

- (i) Reference number of the separate cover under which the abstracted part has been filed: NS 1734-1A
- (ii) How many documents have been abstracted: 3 pp
- (iii) The date of each such document: c. April 1958
- (iv) The description of each document:  
NS 1734 witness statement Sean Connolly 132-34 (ind)  
names and details of 2 persons referred

(Where appropriate, a composite description may be entered in respect of two or more related documents).

- (v) Reason(s) why the part has been abstracted for retention:  
(c) Would or might cause distress or danger to living persons on the ground that they contain information about individuals, or would or might be likely to lead to an action for damages for defamation.

(These will be the reasons given on the certificate under Section 8(4).)

Moloney  
Name: (J. Moloney.)

Grade: Col.

Department/Office/Court:

Date: 7 March 2003.

Before I proceed with the rest of the story I would like to relate some of the happenings in the area while I was in Mountjoy.

My brother Pat, who had already been appointed Commandant in charge of special operations in both the 5th and 4th Battalion areas, was now appointed O/C. of the 4th Battalion, and held this rank until a further promotion which I will deal with later.

One of the first operations carried out in the 4th Battalion area was carried out after my brother Pat's appointment. It became known as the Salford ambush. He had ordered all guns in the Battalion area to be taken to a vacant house (the property of McKenna's of Mullagh) in

Salford, for repairs and general overhaul. They were dumped in the house and Pat personally supervised the work which was carried out in the utmost secrecy. They were dumped on a Saturday morning. Next morning when Pat was going to Mass, a little girl followed him and told him that a number of Tans were going down a lane leading to the house where the arms had been dumped.

had been on the job when they were dumped and Pat came to the conclusion that it could have been none other than who had informed the Tans of the whereabouts of the arms. Pat collected a few of his available men and whatever arms were about the village of Moynalty and proceeded towards Salford. He called to and brought him along with the others. He was determined to put his suspicions of to the test. By crossing the fields they reached the house before the Tans, collected the arms and loaded them into a horse trap which they had commandeered from a farmer on his way to Mass along the lane. The farmer's name was Smyth, nicknamed "Paddy the Wrangler". When they had loaded the trap they left Smyth with it and proceeded to take up ambush positions along a ditch to await the return of the Tans. Pat ordered every man to hold his fire until the Tans came into the ambuskade, and told them that the moment he opened fire they were all to follow suit and join in the attack immediately. was posted in the centre of the party armed with a revolver. In a short time the Tans were observed some distance away guarding Smyth and his precious load. They were coming into the ambuskade. The attack was surely going to turn the tables on them. While they were still fifty perches distant, opened fire with his revolver without waiting for the order from Pat. The Tans, taken by surprise and not knowing the strength of our men, took to the open fields leaving Smyth and

his load behind. Our men gave chase but the enemy got clear away and took shelter in Walterstown House, the property of a Colonel Farrell. Here they remained while Farrell went personally to a military camp at Whiteswood for reinforcements. The I.R.A. could not spend too much time looking for the Tans. They had the load of arms to look after and a motor car, the property of the District Inspector, R.I.C., which had been abandoned by the Tans.

One section of the I.R.A. was detailed to look after the arms and another to destroy the car. The arms were safely dumped and the car was driven by a young man named Curran of Moynalty to Carriga where it was set on fire and destroyed.

The incident took place on Sunday morning the 21st January, 1921. The house was raided night and day after this incident by both the Tans and Military.

As I have already stated my brother, Commandant Pat Farrelly, held a roving commission as well as being in sole charge of the 4th or Moynalty Battalion. A short time after the Salford attack, Pat planned an attack on Oldcastle R.I.C. barracks. Oldcastle was in the 5th or Ballinlough Battalion and the officers of this battalion at this period were Tom Manning, O/C., Peter O'Higgins, Adjutant, and Barney Harte, Quartermaster. John Keogh, whom I met in Mountjoy, was Battalion O/C. of the 5th Battalion previous to Tom Manning. It had been decided that the two battalions, both 4th and 5th, would participate in the attack on Oldcastle barracks. Shortly before the

date on which the attack was to take place a section of the Oldcastle Company were to occupy a house opposite the barracks. This house was to become vacant before the attack and the Oldcastle sections were to occupy it as soon as the occupier had left, in that they could keep an eye on the movements of the enemy and give them the impression that it was still being occupied by the tenant. This arrangement would enable the attacking party, as they dribbled into the town, to take up positions there, at their own convenience. Arrangements were made with a mason named Pat Reilly of Fartagh, to get on to the roof of a house some short distance from the barracks and with his tools to creep along the roof tops to the roof of the barracks and silently remove a number of slates therefrom. When all was ready for the attack, it was intended to send a Volunteer on to the roof to drop in a couple of hand-grenades after the ceiling had been broken. A night or two previous to the arranged date all arms, grenades and a land-mine were taken to a dump in the Ballinlough Company area. The rendezvous for the general body was the end of Stoney Road, Oldcastle, about 9 p.m.

The Ballinlough men were to be there first with all arms and the land-mine. The Commandant and his men met in the village of Carnaross. After commandeering a horse and spring cart they set off for Oldcastle. On the way they commandeered a second horse and cart. Great was their dismay when they reached Stoney Road to meet not the men from Ballinlough with the guns and land-mines but two priests waiting for them. The priests inquired for the man in charge and Pat stepped forward. They ordered him to disband his men and to get them home as quickly as possible, telling him they would not allow such a blackguardly attack to take place in Oldcastle, pointing out the amount of destruction and hardship he would cause to the

innocent people of Oldcastle if he carried out his plans. Pat informed the priests that he had a duty to perform and pointed out that he was legally appointed officer of a legal army, acting under the control of a Government elected by the people. He added that he was acting under the orders of the Minister of Defence of the Government. After some further discussions Pat told them that he had no alternative but to place them under arrest, explaining to them that they knew too much for the safety of his men and for their own safety. The priests then told Pat that the Commandant of the local Battalion - Tom Manning - had approached them earlier for their advice and told them of the proposed attack and had asked if he and his men would be justified in putting their lives in danger by such an undertaking. Their reply was definitely negative. They forbade Pat or his men to come into the town or to send in arms either, and advised him to cancel whatever arrangements he had made for the attack.

In the circumstances Pat had no alternative but to call off the attack. He sent in a couple of men to bring back Pat Reilly who was already on the roof of a house near the barracks. The men in the vacant house opposite the barracks were also notified of the decision. This act of mutiny was a dreadfully serious affair and it shook the whole organization in the area to its roots. When the matter was reported to G.H.Q., Commandant Farrelly was ordered to arrest every I.R.A. man in the Battalion. It was a big job to arrest every man in the battalion from the Commandant down. The task was achieved and all hands were detained for interrogation only. As might be expected, a good number of the men were loyal and blameless, but their Commandant and some of the officers and a few Volunteers were not, and they proved very obstinate and

unco-operative and refused to give any reason for their mutiny. They obstinately refused to surrender the arms in the area.

It was a difficult situation and difficult situations deserve dreadful remedies. When all the threats and persuasions failed there was no alternative but to have recourse to the dreadful remedy of flogging. The ex-Commandant was taken out and flogged until he answered all questions put to him and had promised to surrender all arms in the area. Some of the other officers and a few of the men were flogged to a lesser degree until they also agreed to hand over all arms in their possession. Every I.R.A. man who was a relative or friend of those degraded were in a very unsettled state with the result that the situation in the area was in a very bad way. This was the situation already referred to earlier when I had a visit in Mountjoy by the Brigade O/C., Seán Boylan.

On the night after taking the I.R.B. oath, I attended a Battalion Council meeting in Ballinlough, as instructed by the Brigade O/C. Among the officers present were David Smyth, Battalion O/C., Peter Connell, Adjutant, and Bryan Daly, Quartermaster. Seán Boylan presided. There was a long and serious discussion that night concerning the organisation in the battalion-area. It was all outside my ken. At the meeting I was appointed Vice Commandant of the Battalion with instructions to take charge of the Special Services. One of the first jobs assigned to me was to raid Blackwater railway station for Belfast goods. At this time Belfast goods were boycotted as a result of a ban imposed by the Sinn Féin Executive against their use. After the meeting, I found myself alone in the middle of the night, with an order to raid the station before morning. I called on Paddy McDonnell and told him I had been appointed Vice-Commandant and



explained that I had to raid the station by morning. The station was situated in Paddy's own Company area. I told him to get his men together to carry out the job and that I would remain to give him a hand. Paddy's brother, Tommy, and I went to the farmyard of a Mr. Nicholson and commandeered a couple of horses and carts, having first roused Nicholson's horseman - Peter Hynes - for the keys of the stables.

We galloped off in the dead of the night for the station, the noise of the iron-shod wheels resounding through the stillness of that late hour. When we got there we found Paddy and his men waiting for us, with the half-dressed stationmaster among them and the gates and stores open. Having loaded up some tons of stuff on the two carts, we held a consultation as to where we would dump it. John Keogh was with us, having been released from Mountjoy a few days earlier. He suggested an old house on the roadside, the property of Pat Rooney of Seymourstown. We packed the two loads into that little house for the time being. It consisted, for the most part, of farm seeds which were consigned to Mr. T. P. McKenna of Mullagh. We then left for home and a sleep. Next morning, when one of our men went to inspect the stuff, all of it had been stolen.

The raid on the station had a most unfortunate result for us. Two mornings after, on the 23rd March, 1921, all the Military and Tans around the area started a widespread search for the missing property and for those responsible. Several loads of Tans called to McDonnell's. They lived in a house situated at a crossroads in Stonefield. The two boys were at home at the time. They both made a dash for liberty. Paddy had no shelter and he soon fell riddled with bullets. Tommy made good his escape. The Tans threw Tommy's dead body into a lorry and took it to Kells R.I.C. barracks.

They handed it over a few days later to his people for internment. The country was in such a state of turmoil at this period that it was not possible to give Paddy/a <sup>as big</sup> ~~big~~ funeral as we had given Seamus Hogan. He was buried beside Seamus in the Republican plot in Ballinlough cemetery. May he rest in peace. He was a very brave soldier and a very sincere Republican. His death was a serious loss to our Movement. His place was taken by Harry Lee of Ballinlough. It did not take me long to get around the different Companies in the battalion area and in a very short time I was able to report to Brigade Headquarters that I had the area reorganised and in full working order again. We were now holding regular meetings and receiving weekly reports from each Company in the Battalion.

We now decided to carry out a major operation on our own and after many meetings and discussions decided to attack an enemy patrol of a couple of lorry loads of Tans which travelled very early in the mornings between Kells and Oldcastle. We selected a spot for the attack convenient to Sylvan Park House. On the night of the 30th March, 1921, we assembled in a disused house in the vicinity. The whole Battalion was represented. We numbered at least fifty, all armed with shot guns with the exception of six men who carried rifles. We had two land-mines. Matt Tevlin, our Engineer, was in charge of those. He set to work and with the help of about ten Volunteers laid them, some yards apart, by morning. He inserted detonators and attached a couple of lengths of electric wire which he stretched for several perches into a field on the opposite side of the road from Sylvan Park House. The Battalion O/C. David Smyth, was in charge. For our own safety we arrested an old carpenter who lived in the gate house of Sylvan Park House.

In the early morning we took up positions in extended formation behind a stone wall on the left-hand side of the road as one faced Oldcastle. We broke loop-holes in the wall and in a short time were ready for the attack. Five or six men, with rifles, were placed near the main gate to the house and ~~they~~<sup>two</sup> were put in charge of the batteries on the opposite side to explode the mines. They were some short distance off the road. We were on duty all night and it was now 8 o'clock in the morning, two hours later than the usual time the enemy patrol was due to pass, but there was no sign of them yet.

Our men were getting hungry and tired, so we sent a few of the lads to neighbouring houses for food. One young lad called to a Protestant family named Hill and said he wanted tea and eggs. He returned with a bucket of tea full of broken eggs. I don't believe this hash was sent to us out of malice. It may have been due to the stupidity of the maid. At Sylvan Park House the lads were offered a blank refusal. When I heard this I went to the yard and unearthed a workman - Peter Higgins - and asked him for a heavy sledge. I called on the three ladies within to open the door: it will be remembered that these were the three Rowley ladies who opened fire when we were about to raid their house for arms. They refused. I ordered Higgins to break it open. After the first blow the door was opened from within. They eventually supplied all the tea and food required.

By this time we had collected a number of passers-by who had observed us in position. They included a postman with his mail in a pony trap. Coming up to ten o'clock, our O/C. got nervous. He feared the enemy were aware of our positions and were gathering

a big force to surround us. He consulted with me and we agreed to wait another hour. In the meantime the Brigade Vice Commandant, Seamus Finn arrived. He agreed with Commandant Smyth that it was better to lift the mines and disband quietly. The order was given accordingly. Ten men were retained to cover the Engineers while they were removing the mines. They had them just lifted when our scouts reported the approach of an enemy lorry. Our Engineers crossed over the wall and took cover beside us. The lorry contained several Tans from Kells, the very men we wanted. When they came within range we opened fire. They returned our fire and continued on their way. We do not know if they had any casualties. It appears that this lorry load of Tans were out looking for the postman who had failed to report in Crossakiel that morning with his mail. The scene of the ambush was enclosed by four roads, none of which was more than a mile long. The place was not ideal for an ambush, but it was the best available. We who had remained had not left the scene twenty minutes, when we heard the roar of the lorries we had planned to attack coming from Oldcastle, several hours later than usual. The occupants opened fire as they passed through Sylvan Park; apparently they had been informed by the Tans we had ambushed.

Now it was decided by G.H.Q. to divide the country into Divisions. Ours became the 1st Eastern. The Division Staff appointed were Sean Boylan, O/C.; Seamus Finn, Vice O/C.; Pat Clinton, Adjutant; Seamus O'Higgins, Quartermaster and Eamon Cullen, Engineer. This Division was divided into nine Brigades. Ours was No. 3. Brigade. It extended roughly from Killalan in County Westmeath to Killan near Shercock in County Cavan, and from Finnor to the Monaghan/Louth border. The Brigade

staff appointed were, my brother, Pat Farrelly, O/C. ; T.P. McKenna, Adjutant; David Smyth, Quartermaster, and Mick Monaghan, Engineer.

No. 3. Brigade comprised seven battalions. They were - Newcastle, Ballinlough, Oldcastle, Virginia, Bailieboro', Castlerahan and Kingscourt. I was still in charge of the Special Services in my old Battalion area. I organised lines of communication to work like clock-work. Dispatch centres had to be found in each Company area and a crew of dispatch riders organised. First aid classes were started and personnel appointed for them. Engineering and Signalling classes were also started and last, but not the least troublesome, was the reorganisation of the Cumann na mBan in the area. Those ladies were very resourceful at a time when the country was full of soldiers and Tans. I remember one of them in particular. She was Katie Keogh of Ballinlough. She arrived one day at Clonagouna with a very important dispatch for me and rode her bicycle all the way meeting several squads of enemy personnel on the way. She carried the document in her mouth.

At this period a wanted I.R.A. man was not sure of a night's sleep be it in the home of one of our supporters or in the home of a loyalist. All were being raided by the enemy. Phil Tevlin, one of the Battalion officers, was staying in the home of a loyalist named Miss McCormack around this time. It was raided and he was arrested and interned. We were forced to build dug-outs here and there for ourselves. I constructed one in a ditch in one of our fields alongside the Blackwater River in Carnaross. I erected a number of poles and criss-crossed those with hay and branches for a roof. The sides were made of similar material. I crept into this at the bottom of a furze bush. When emerging I had to be very cautious lest a neighbour of mine, a John Briody, should see me.

The jails and internment camps were now full to capacity and it was part of the local Cumann na mBan's duty to send little gifts to our men inside. To raise money for this purpose, they ran an occasional dance. Many of the girls were honesty itself; but others, whose boy friends were interned, used this money only for the benefit of their own particular friends inside and neglected others. Complaints were received at Divisional Headquarters about this discrimination and I was asked to intervene. I attended one of their dances in the Carnaross area, took charge of all money collected, paid any bills due for refreshments or musicians and found I had a sum of of 50/- over. I handed over the money to my superiors and got a receipt which I forwarded to the Cumann na mBan; thereafter all of our men locked up were provided with cigarettes or some little necessity, as far as possible.

Hell broke loose after the taking of the cash and a meeting followed immediately among the girls affected. They declared they would give us no further help. I called a meeting of the Cumann na mBan and in the face of much abuse from the aggrieved party, elected new officers and struck the names of the mutineers off the roll. After a short time the Cumann na mBan was back to full strength, when new members joined. As soon as my report on the matter reached the Divisional Staff I was appointed Brigade Vice Commandant of No. 3. Brigade and from then had a much wider field to travel.

Large-scale enemy raids, the biggest yet, were taking place around the month of May. Enemy lorries were constantly on the roads and our house in Clonagouna was sometimes raided four or five times a day. On one particular morning my brother, Father Kieran, was saying Mass upstairs in the sitting-room, while my mother and brothers, Mick and Jim, were attending. During the Mass the priest

was the first to hear the approach of the dreaded enemy lorries. He turned quietly to the two boys and told them to run. They took different directions and got under cover and lay down. The searchers had blood-hounds with them this time and within a few minutes the boys were located in their hideouts. They were arrested, placed in one of the lorries and taken to Mullagh where the enemy had most of the townspeople rounded up on the fair green. From Mullagh both Mick and Jim were taken in stages to Harepark Camp and interned. I had a very narrow escape around the same period. I was asleep under a furzebush in one of our fields one day, following a night's dancing, when I was awakened by Matt Tevlin, who told me to leave at once, that the countryside was full of Tans and Military and that there were three Tans standing on the road just outside where I slept. I moved off immediately. In order to reach me in the field Matt Tevlin got a bucket and pretended to be picking stones on his way towards me.

Owing to enemy activity it was now very difficult to carry on the Sinn Féin Courts. Victims caught administering the law were as harshly dealt with as the fighting men. In the circumstances it was difficult to get anyone, other than an I.R.A. man, to administer the law, so it fell almost entirely on the I.R.A. In the Kingscourt district a very heavy list of cases had accumulated: some of these had been before the English Courts for years. My brother Hughie happened to be home at the time and he, Pat Cogan (a brother of the late Commandant Cogan) and myself were deputed to act as Judges for the Kingscourt sitting. The Court was held in the basement of a hall at the Moynalty end of the town. We dealt with the cases in turn. There was no display of any kind, the only persons present being the three Judges, the litigants concerned in a case and one or two Volunteers. When one case was

finished, the litigants in the next were brought in. The rule of justice was our guide and all cases were dealt with accordingly. None of the cases we dealt with that night ever came into Court again. We subsequently attended as Judges at Courts in Bailieboro', Virginia, Oldcastle and other areas without incident.

We had all been upset because the Sylvan Park ambush had not been a complete success, so we decided to try again with fewer men. This time we selected Drumbaragh as the scene of an ambush. Matt Tevlin was in charge this time. He planted a mine in the road and placed fourteen men armed with shotguns and a rifle or two behind a wall overlooking the road. He himself took up a position with a battery in a tree nearby. The battery had been connected to an electric wire attached at the other end to the mine. He had been in the tree for some time and was getting cramped, so he decided to come down and send up another man. This man had just taken his place in the tree when a lorry load of military approached. This lorry got through, but a second lorry came on the scene. As it drove into the ambush the mine was exploded. The lorry swerved on the road and mounted the ditch. With that three other lorries were seen approaching while the first one returned to the scene. With great difficulty the ambush party managed to withdraw. The military charged across the fields after them with fixed bayonets. Some of our boys took cover in a dry dyke and were not seen although the military actually <sup>(ROSSED)</sup> ~~crossed~~ this dyke. After some time the military returned to the lorries and proceeded on their way. One of our men, a postman named Jack Lynch, was slightly wounded.

On former occasions in the fight for Irish freedom there were spies and informers in plenty and so it was in our period from 1913 to 1921. We had our share of spies and we dealt with them severely.



One such man was a Carnaross man named Nicholas Bradley. He had fought in France in the first world war and was appointed postman in the village in place of one of our men Jack Tevlin, who had been arrested in connection with his I.R.A. activities. Living as he was among all the boys and with his advantage as postman, he was in a position to know every active I.R.A. man in the district. He used his opportunity and compiled a list of every I.R.A. man in the area. In a raid on the local Post Office in the early spring of 1921, the list together with a letter from him were found among the mail, addressed to Dublin Castle. The list contained twenty-one names every one of whom were active I.R.A. men. He was arrested and courtmartialled. He was found guilty and sentenced to death. Before his execution, Father Swan, a Kilmessan man and a Curate in Moynalty, heard his Confession and administered the last rites of the Church. He was buried in Pathmaine Wood.

Another young man named Keelin from Kilmainhamwood was very intimate with the Tans. It was known that he was giving them whatever information he could. The I.R.A. thought that by giving him a fright he might realise the gravity of his behaviour, so he was arrested and taken to an "unknown destination". This was an unused house in Lower Leitrim, the property of a Miss McMahon of Mullagh. After being detained for a few weeks, he was severely cautioned and released. It was misplaced leniency. After his release he travelled the countryside with the Tans in their raids and brought them to the house in which he had been detained. They burned it to the ground. He was kept under observation and at the first opportunity was rearrested. At the courtmartial which followed he was found guilty and was later executed. There were many others, not quite so dangerous; but, as the penalty was so severe, they were given a chance.

Around this time the Tans made it a practice to take away all bicycles found around the house of an I.R.A. man while on their raids. In retaliation the I.R.A. seized Post Office bicycles whenever possible. Those bicycles were always painted red. When seized they were generally painted a different colour but they were a certain type and were easily distinguishable. A young man named Pearar Dunne was in possession of one of those machines one day when he met the Tans. They arrested him and took him to Kells R.I.C. barracks for a few days. His mother pleaded with the R.I.C. for his release but got no satisfaction. Father Kelly, the Parish Priest whom I mentioned before, then called to the barracks and told the authorities that Dunne was not an I.R.A. man and that he had not one Sinn Féiner in his parish. The Tans contradicted him and asked "What would you call Pat Farrelly?" The priest replied, "Pat Farrelly is not a parishioner of mine; he lives in his own house over in Moynalty". Up to then the Tans were unaware that Pat had a house of his own and were under the impression that he was living in our old home in Clonagouna. He was comparatively safe in Moynalty and always slept there, but now the raids started, often several times a day. Finally the Tans sprinkled it with petrol and set it on fire and ran. As they left an old woman drawing water from a well opposite - her name was Mrs. Tyrrell - threw two buckets of water on the flames and put out the fire.

My brother Philip who had been arrested in November, 1920, and was still in Ballykinlar, also had his own house in Balnagun. Pat called there about this time to see how things were. When he got there, a raid was in progress and he narrowly missed arrest. He took cover and waited. When the Tans left in a hurry, he suspected some villany and ran to the house. They had started a fire and he was just in time to put it out. On the following Sunday while he

was at Mass in Moynalty, the Church was surrounded. As the congregation left they were searched. Pat was identified and arrested. He was put into a waiting lorry while further investigations were being made. After some conversation about the Sinn Féin movement he was told to "get to hell out of this". Pat got down and got mixed up in the congregation and eventually ran down a lane to safety. When the R.I.C. man (named Murphy), who had identified Pat, returned to the lorry and saw Pat was gone, he raised a great row, but that was amongst themselves.

With my new command, and at the same time looking after the Special Services and Courts, I was kept very busy attending Brigade and Battalion meetings to arrange details of proposed ambushes. One such ambush had been arranged at Loughan crossroads near the residence of an ex-British army man named Challoner. During our raids for arms he was one of the men who refused to hand over his guns so we had to use force. He resisted strongly. His house was a big one and it took some hours to collect what stuff he had. The boys had been in position for some time awaiting the arrival of an enemy lorry when a local man got in touch with one of the lads and told him that Challoner had been out shooting or walking through his lands and had probably observed them waiting. The local man had seen Challoner hurriedly making his way to his house and afterwards driving in his car towards Kells. Loughan was only a few miles from Kells and it was considered best to call off the ambush. The local man was right. Challoner informed the military in Kells and a strong force converged on the ambush position but our men were gone. At a Brigade meeting later it was decided to take the car off Challoner. Many such ambushes were planned and positions taken at Arlow Cross and elsewhere, but the enemy always appeared to be informed in time and so they never came off.

National Archives Act, 1986, Regulations, 1988

**ABSTRACTION OF PART(S) PURSUANT TO REGULATION 8**

**Form to be completed and inserted in the original record  
in place of each part abstracted**

- (i) Reference number of the separate cover under which the abstracted part has been filed: WS 1734/A
- (ii) How many documents have been abstracted: 1 p.
- (iii) The date of each such document: c. April 1958

(iv) The description of each document:  
WS 1734 Witness Statement Sean Fennelly p 47  
indiv: Sean Fennelly

(Where appropriate, a composite description may be entered in respect of two or more related documents).

- (v) Reason(s) why the part has been abstracted for retention:  
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( These will be the reasons given on the certificate under Section 8(4).)

J. Moloney

Name: (J. Moloney.)

Grade: Col.

Department/Office/Court:

Date: 7 March 2003.

One evening, however, as it was getting dark, some of our boys noticed a private car containing a District Inspector Rowland and four or five R.I.C. drive through the village of Carnaross from Kells to Virginia. Four or five of the local Company got together, armed themselves with shotguns and got behind a ditch at Dervor to await their return. While they were waiting, Commandant Pat Farrelly came on the scene and joined them. Just as he did so the private car drove into the ambushade. They all fired like one man. There were cries of agony from the car which swerved badly but continued its journey. Casualties in an accident like this were seldom reported but Kells people who saw them arrive at their barracks said that the District Inspector had been wounded. Seán Boylan, Divisional O/C., now issued an order to shoot all Tans on sight in the streets of Kells. I went in one night to help the local Company to carry out the order. I could not meet one of them, but instead saw the Tans in twos and threes in various degrees of intoxication, all carrying long Webleys. I went to Dulane to find the Company Captain. There I met all the I.R.A. men who should have been in Kells. Seamus Finn, the Divisional Adj't., was among them. He informed me that he had countermanded the order.

Having to do with the maintenance of law and order, our men were afforded a great opportunity of learning of the unhappiness and difficulties in some homes. We were called on to intervene in several cases. One such raid was that of an \_\_\_\_\_ and named \_\_\_\_\_. He was a bully who abused his wife and threatened to shoot her. She came to me with her complaint and sought protection. I called to the house next evening. When \_\_\_\_\_ appeared I demanded his gun. He handed me a revolver. I then asked for his shotgun which he promptly handed over. This was a man who, after drinking all night in a pub in Carnaross, would stand at the

crossroads there and shout "To hell with the Pope". When I took the matter up the Pope was left in peace. We had a somewhat similar case in Virginia. A doctor's wife sought protection from her husband. On the strength of her complaint we arrested the doctor and detained him for a while, but it later transpired it was she who was responsible for the trouble.

In many cases the arms in our dumps were not looked after properly, so we took over Cabra House and had a lot of them stored there where they could be cleaned and oiled. A few good men were put on this job, including Mattie Tevlin, a first-class man, and Johnnie Boylan, a blacksmith, who knew his job thoroughly. A good strong guard was placed on the house to protect them. The guard usually consisted of eight men. I usually stayed with them as it was a good safe place. We all slept in the one bed on the floor. The last man in would wind up a phonograph we had acquired. He first played a record of The Lord's Prayer and then played a short sermon. These were our nightly prayers.

At the latter end of June or early July there were rumours of a Truce, followed by the announcement that a truce was definitely coming into force on the 11th July, 1921. We received an order from the Divisional O/C., Seán Boylan, to attack the enemy everywhere and anywhere we could find them on the previous night. This, we were told, was to strengthen the hands of our negotiators. There were eight attacks carried out in our Brigade area that night. I will refer to one in which I took part. This one was at Mapes Bridge near Kells. A party of soldiers came to this point every morning with a lorry filled with barrels to collect water, and it was decided to attack them. I was appointed to carry out the attack. With this object in view,

I mobilised the Carnaross Company on the parade ground. I explained to the men the job that had to be carried out and told them that we would collect Challoner's car on the way.

I brought seven of the men with me to Challoner's. When he opened the door to our knock, I ordered him to march before us to the car and drive it out. He did as he was told. When we had the car outside the gate, we told him to report the matter to the Tans saying "Perhaps they will help you now as you helped them." The eight of us boarded the car which was driven by Joe Lynch of Carnaross. He was the only one among us who could drive. We were all armed. When we got to Miles crossroads, Joe wheeled for Carnaross instead of going straight ahead for Mapes Bridge. I made him stop the car and ordered him to proceed to the bridge, but he refused, saying "Do you think we are mad to go and get killed and a truce being signed tomorrow, after all the fighting we have done." It was mutiny. Some of those in the car agreed with him but about three of the others were willing to carry on. I told those who were willing to fight to hold themselves in readiness until I got help. I went to Moynalty and was lucky enough to meet the Brigade O/C. of that area - Pat. He told me he would get the Moynalty Company mobilised for the job and get them into action. Every man of the Moynalty Company turned out next morning. When the lorry appeared they opened fire. Instead of collecting the water the driver accelerated and drove off. The I.R.A. were armed with shotguns and the attack was of short duration. Joe Lynch took Challoner's car to the drill field in Carnaross after I left him the night before, but Challoner had it taken away before noon on the 11th July, 1921. We took it from him again but had to return it as he

had it in his possession after noon on the day of the Truce. Actually we were guilty of a breach of the Truce. The mutiny of the Carnaross men was reported to Headquarters of the Division and they were suspended for some time during the Truce.

Before I close I would like to refer to something which was of great significance to the farmers of Ireland. In 1920, our Government made an order which prohibited farmers from paying the Land Commission Annuities. The idea behind the order, we were told, was that by withholding the annuities the farmers were fighting the British as effectively as if they carried a gun. Many farmers in our area obeyed this order. As leaders in our area it was up to our family to show the lead. We all refused to pay. A decree was obtained by the Land Commission (in the English Court of course) for six months rent against Pat in respect of his farm in Moynalty. The Sheriff sent out the decree by a party of Tans who collected three cattle, coloured red, white and blue, in lieu. They were taken to the pound in Kells. Pat heard of the incident and he called on the Sheriff who was in bed at the time. When he was got out of bed, Pat ordered him to come with him and release his cattle. After some discussion the Sheriff gave him a signed order directed to the Keeper of the pound for the release of the three cattle. Pat collected a few of his men who collected the cattle and drove them home. To avoid further trouble he then sold them. This was only one of the many decrees issued in the area with the result that all farmers who did not pay their annuities sold their stock sooner than have them seized. All of those lands were now in meadows. When the meadows were being auctioned the



rate collector was present to declare that he would distrain the hay for the non-payment of rates. In connection with this I should explain that the order for the non-payment of annuities was taken to include the non-payment of rates to the County Council. Eventually all the farms in the area of Fegatt, Moynalty, Carnaross and Clonacouna were offered for sale by the Land Commission; but in every case those sales were unsuccessful. The posters advertising them were pulled down all over the country immediately they were put up. The law expenses were all the time increasing and accumulating. Under the administration of our Government the Land Commission later obtained a decree against me for all this accumulated debt and thirty head of cattle were seized on me. It was the same experience with neighbouring farmers.

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

WITNESS: \_\_\_\_\_

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