

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 1,763

ROINN



COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1,763.

Witness

Daniel Breen, T.D.,
9, St. Kevin's Park,
Dartry,
Dublin.

Identity.

Quartermaster, 3rd Tipperary Bde.,
I. R. A.

Subject.

I. R. A. activities, July, 1921 - May, 1924.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil.

File No S. 1,352.

Form B S M 2

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 1,763

SECOND STATEMENT BY MR. DAN BREEN. T.D..

9. St. Kevin's Park. Dartry. Dublin.

"SWORN TO BE FREE".

Chapter 1.

From the Truce to the Civil War:

The Truce was regarded by the Volunteers as a triumph, as, indeed, it was. The Irish Republican Army had, by its guerilla tactics, achieved what a regular army could never have achieved against the military might of Great Britain. It had forced the enemy to make a Truce and to waive the preliminary condition - until then insisted upon - that the Volunteers should surrender their arms before there could be any question of negotiations. The most significant feature of the terms of the Truce was that the "rebel" forces were now being treated not as a "murder gang" or a small "band of assassins" as Lloyd George had so often described them heretofore, but as soldiers of an opposing army.

The declaration of the Truce was welcomed by the people at large. By many it was thought that the recognition of the Republic was but a matter of time. The long nightmare period of terror was over, and in their reaction people were inclined to think that victory had already been won. In many places bonfires were lit, but these were promptly extinguished by the Volunteers who saw the necessity of restraining such premature manifestations of exultation. The fight was not yet over; the truce might prove to be just a breathing space before a new and more terrible era of

hostilities opened. In the meantime, the morale of the army and of the people must be preserved and discipline maintained in the ranks of the Volunteers.

The President issued a Proclamation in which he reminded the people that they must be ready to resist should force be once more used:

"Fellow Citizens,

During the period of the truce each individual soldier and citizen must regard himself as the custodian of the nation's honour. Your discipline must prove in the most convincing manner that this is the struggle of an organised nation. In the negotiations now initiated, your representatives will do their utmost to secure a just and peaceful termination of this struggle, but history, particularly our own history, and the character of the issue to be decided are a warning against undue confidence. An unbending determination to endure all that may still be necessary, and fortitude such as you have shown in all your recent sufferings - these alone will lead you to the peace you desire. Should force be resumed against our nation, you must be ready on your part once more to resist. Thus alone will you secure the final abandonment of force, and the acceptance of justice and reason as the arbiter".

The truce was well observed by both sides in the beginning, but as time went on the Black and Tans were guilty of many breaches of the terms which had been agreed upon between the two armies. Liaison officers had been appointed by both sides to assist in maintaining the proper

observance of the truce and to fix the responsibility for any breaches that might occur. The Chief Liaison Officer for the I.R.A. was Commandant Eamon Duggan, but owing to the special conditions prevailing in the martial law area, Commandant-General Tom Barry was later appointed Chief Liaison Officer I.R.A. for that area. Seán Fitzpatrick, Brigade Adjutant, 3rd Tipperary Brigade, became Liaison Officer for South Tipperary.

At first the British Army authorities observed all the proprieties and took great care to give the Republican officers their proper military titles. But a change soon made itself evident. When Commandant-General Barry called on Brigadier-General Higginson on official business wearing the uniform of an officer of the Irish Republican Army, the British General refused to see him unless he appeared in civilian dress.

A similar state of affairs manifested itself in Limerick. There the liaison officer was Commandant P. Barry, and he was thus addressed by Colonel-Commandant Cameron in his official correspondence, and was received by him at his headquarters in the New Barracks, Limerick, in his official capacity as Commandant Barry. A few days later, however, all this was changed. Letters addressed to him now bore the inscription Mr. P. Barry instead of Commandant P. Barry, and it became evident that whatever recognition had been given the Irish Army in the terms of agreement for a truce was now being, in fact, withdrawn. The Irish officers were informed that instructions had been issued by the British Headquarters that the British liaison officers were to deal with their Irish counterparts only as civilians and representatives of Mr. de Valera. The Irish Republican Army officers very properly refused to deal with the British

except in their military capacity as representatives of the Irish Army, and in view of the British attitude Commandant-General Barry instructed all southern liaison officers in the martial law area to cease co-operating with the British forces until the latter should recognise their proper status and treat them as officers of the Irish Republican Army.

As the British refused to alter their attitude and the I.R.A. officers in the martial law area were adamant in regard to the stand they had taken in this matter, the difficulty was tided over by an arrangement made by the Irish G.H.Q. According to this arrangement, breaches, or reported breaches, of the truce were to be investigated by the I.R.A. liaison officer and a report sent to the Chief Liaison Officer in Dublin who would deal directly with the British Government in the matter.

On the coming into operation of the truce, training camps for officers and Volunteers were set up throughout Ireland with a view to perfecting the discipline and military efficiency of the army in the event of a renewal of the war. It was quite within the bounds of probability that the war might be renewed at any time, as all depended on whether the negotiations with the British would be brought to a successful conclusion or not. In Tipperary, as in other parts of Ireland, every care was taken to see that the Volunteers were brought to the highest pitch of efficiency, and the better to achieve this purpose an officers' training camp was organised in Ballinard Castle near Drangan. Commandant Prout, later to be Commandant Lacy's opponent in the Civil War as O/C Free State forces in South Tipperary, was appointed Training O/C at Ballinard, and officers from every battalion in the 3rd Tipperary Brigade attended the courses of instruction given there.

Amongst the other training camps set up at this period was that at Glenpatrick in Co. Waterford which was a Battalion 5 training camp under the command of Commandant Paddy Dalton ("Big Paddy"), Officer Commanding the 5th Battalion. This camp was attended by the 5th Battalion members of No. 2 Flying Column and several others. A camp at Grantstown catered for members of the 4th Battalion, while that at Galtee Castle was in the 6th Battalion area. This latter camp was commanded by Commandant Prout after he had ceased to command the officers' training camp in Ballinard. Besides the above-mentioned camps there was a camp for engineers at Rochestown which was commanded by Seán Cooney, O/C Engineers, 5th Battalion.

The interval of the truce was availed of in many parts of Ireland to disinter the remains of Volunteers who, having been killed in action or otherwise, had to be given a hurried burial in secret places. They were now re-interred with all the solemnity and ceremony due to those who had given their lives for Irish freedom. One such ceremony was that of the re-interment of the former O/C of the 5th Battalion, Commandant Denis Sadleir who had been accidentally killed by the discharge of a comrade's rifle shortly before the truce. Owing to the circumstances in which he met his death and the conditions then prevailing, he was buried secretly in Grangemockler. The remains were removed from their temporary resting place and re-interred in the family burial ground in Drangan on August 11th. The day was kept as a general holiday and a day of public mourning in the towns of Clonmel, Carrick, Cahir and Fethard. All business houses were closed and even the cinemas did not open.

The funeral took place after High Mass in Grangemockler Church which was attended by members of the Clonmel Corporation in state, headed by the Mayor, Alderman Frank Drohan, T.D. The coffin was draped in the Republican colours and the Kilkenny War Pipers' Band, the members of which were in uniform, headed the funeral procession. Thousands marched in the procession. Large contingents of Cumann na mBan and Fianna Éireann from all over South Tipperary attended and marched immediately after the band. Following these came a lorry piled high with wreaths. A body-guard of Commandant Sadlier's fellow officers of the 3rd Tipperary Brigade marched on either side of the bier which was followed immediately by the parents, brothers, sisters and relatives of the dead officer. Then came the Clonmel Corporation, followed by three battalions of Irish Volunteers marching in military formation. A long line of horse drawn vehicles and motor cars completed the procession. The procession of cars alone (including motor cars) was over two miles long. The funeral was one of the largest ever seen in Tipperary and took an hour to pass a given point. When the final prayers had been said and the Last Post sounded, three volleys were fired over the grave. Thus did the Volunteers and the people of South Tipperary combine to honour the memory of a brave young Tipperaryman who had given his life for Ireland.

As the months went on breaches of the truce which had at first been rare became more and more frequent and were by no means confined to the Black and Tans. A sensational shooting affray took place in Tipperary town on the 28th September, when a civilian named Patrick Corbett was shot dead and a Miss Tierney, Volunteer Joseph Cahill of the Irish Republican Army and Private Cooper of the

Lincolnshire Regiment in the British Army of Occupation were wounded by shots alleged to have been fired without provocation by two Black and Tans.

A statement issued by the Chief Liaison Officer for the Martial Law area said that Commandant George Power of Cork No. 2 Brigade, who was liaison officer for the district concerned, visited Tipperary for the purpose of holding an inquiry into the circumstances under which the shooting occurred. The result of this inquiry was to fix the blame for the shooting on two Black and Tans in uniform who had wantonly and without any provocation opened fire. The British authorities, on the other hand, came to the conclusion that the firing was due to a deliberate attempt on the part of certain members of the Irish Republican Army, of whom Volunteer Cahill was one, to murder two members of the Royal Irish Constabulary. The event resulted in the arrest of Volunteer Cahill by the British and his courtmartial in Waterford on a charge of attempted murder. He was found guilty by the British courtmartial and sentenced to penal servitude for life but, since the Treaty had been signed in the meantime, the sentence was immediately remitted and he was released.

The first anniversary of the burial of Vice-Brigadier Seán Treacy was observed all over South Tipperary as a general holiday. All business was suspended in Clonmel, Tipperary, Carrick-on-Suir, Cahir and Fethard for the entire day. Mass was offered in all the churches of the area for the repose of the dead leader's soul, and army units attended the Mass in each locality. In Tipperary town and in Kilfeacle High Mass was sung. Impressive ceremonies were witnessed in Kilfeacle where the eight battalions of the 3rd Tipperary Brigade were represented at

the Mass and the commemoration which followed, Vice Brigadier Lacy being in charge of the arrangements. He and the Battalion Commandants were in uniform. The units present from the various battalions were under the command of their own officers as follows:

1st Battalion	-	Commandant	Jerome Davin;	
2nd	"	-	"	Seán Downey;
3rd	"	-	"	Tadhg Dwyer;
4th	"	-	"	Brian Shanahan;
5th	"	-	"	Patrick Dalton;
6th	"	-	"	Seán Prendergast;
7th	"	-	"	Seán Walsh;
8th	"	-	"	Seán Kilmartin.

After the High Mass the Rosary was recited in Irish at the graveside.

As the negotiations dragged on between Ireland and England, breaches of the truce became more frequent and more serious and a growing spirit of unrest and indiscipline made itself apparent in the Army of the Republic. Some observers appeared to detect a growing militaristic spirit in the ranks of the Volunteers, and certain Volunteer officers undoubtedly provoked such criticism by their aggressive attitude towards civilians. An arrogant and domineering attitude, coupled with an ill-concealed sense of superiority over the civilian population, was not calculated to strengthen the bonds which had hitherto existed between the Volunteer and the man in the street. On the contrary, this attitude was bound to alienate popular sympathy from the army which, after all, was the army of the people.

In October, 1921, the army authorities found it necessary to warn Volunteers against adopting a superior or aggressive attitude towards the non-combatant elements of the nation. This warning was contained in An tÓglach, the official organ of the Irish Army. That the warning

was necessary is clear from what has been already related and will be still more clear from certain occurrences soon to be recorded.

"Volunteers", said the article referred to, "should never assume an aggressive or intolerant attitude towards civilians and the non-combatant elements of the nation. They must never forget that they are only a part of the machinery of the Republic. The people of Ireland love and trust the soldiers of the Irish Republican Army who have fought and bled for them. It is the duty of every soldier of Ireland not to alienate that sympathy by adopting an aggressive or superior attitude towards civilians. Furthermore, the forceful methods necessitated by war conditions should, as far as possible, be laid aside during the truce".

A very glaring breach of the truce was perpetrated in Tipperary town on the night of Monday, October 19th, when a policeman was fired at and wounded in the head and arm while drinking in a publichouse. There could be no excuse for such acts which were grave violations of the truce and, as such, redounded to the discredit of the men who were responsible for them and to the dishonour not only of the brigade but of the nation as a whole. Ireland's honour was pledged to observe the terms of the truce, and every such act was a violation of the nation's pledged word and a stain upon its honour.

That there was a growing laxity in the 3rd Tipperary Brigade as regards the observance of the truce is clear from the foregoing examples. Another incident which took place early in November makes this still more evident. The incident referred to is the seizure of seventy rifles from the military hutments at Tipperary.

There were, indeed, two attitudes with regard to the importation or the acquisition of arms and ammunition by the Republican forces. The British held that the acquisition of arms and ammunition to add to the armament of the Volunteers was in itself a breach of the truce. The Volunteers held very strongly that this was not the case; that they were fully entitled to add to their armament. In this the Volunteers were quite correct. It was quite another matter, however, to add to their armament by attacks on British forces or by raids on British supplies, for such activities were undoubtedly breaches of the truce and could not be condoned.

The rifles which were seized were in the East Camp, about twenty yards from the road, and the entrance was effected by cutting through barbed wire entanglements in front of the hutments. Besides the seventy rifles, a box of bombs and a quantity of ammunition, it was ascertained later that two Lewis guns had also been seized. Indignant at this grave breach of the truce, the British demanded the return of the missing articles from the Irish G.H.Q. At that very time negotiations for a Treaty were proceeding in London between representatives of the British and Irish Governments and had then reached a critical stage. It certainly did not make for the success of the negotiations to have such things happening in Ireland, and moreover, it placed the Irish delegates in a very awkward position when charges of this kind were levelled at them by the British delegates. G.H.Q. were forced to take action and did so without delay.

The Limerick Liaison Officer, Commandant Barry, was summoned to Dublin, as were also the Commandants of the East Limerick and South Tipperary Brigades. It is said that

Frank Thornton was sent down from G.H.Q. to investigate the affair personally. At any rate, the upshot of the whole affair was that the guilt was fixed on the 3rd Tipperary Brigade. When ordered by G.H.Q. to return the rifles which had been seized, the O/C 3rd Tipperary Brigade refused on the grounds that the seizure was a perfectly legitimate act, not being an act of war. Of course, whether it was an act of war or not was really beside the point. What did matter was that amongst the terms of the Truce was one article agreed to on behalf of the Irish Army, namely, paragraph (c) which ran: "No interference with Government or private property".

Following the Tipperary raid, the Chief Liaison Officer for Ireland issued a statement in which he said that "Enquiries are being pursued by liaison authorities with a view to tracing the perpetrators. Should it be found that these acts were committed by members of our forces, distinct breaches of the truce were committed, and when found, the parties concerned will be drastically punished. Acts such as these have no authority from G.H.Q., neither are they countenanced by us".

The next serious breach of the truce in the South Tipperary area occurred in Cashel three days after the signing of the Treaty. When walking on the streets at night, two policemen were fired at, one of them being seriously wounded. A civilian standing nearby was also wounded. This shooting was the act of two men in civilian dress who were seen by the Rev. Fr. Duggan, C.C., running up a side street after they had attacked the policemen. Captain Seán Fitzpatrick, Liaison Officer, 3rd Tipperary Brigade, and the British liaison authorities visited Cashel afterwards to make inquiries into the matter.

Following on these occurrences, the Cabinet of Dáil Éireann met to consider the situation which was daily becoming more serious. As a result of their deliberations the following statement was issued: -

"The Cabinet of Dáil Éireann has had before it reports of four attacks on the British forces in Ireland, two members of which have been killed.

The Cabinet is of opinion that these acts were not committed by members of the Republican forces, and it condemns them in the strongest manner.

The Minister for Defence and the Minister for Home Affairs have been directed to investigate the occurrences, and to use every effort to bring the perpetrators to justice".

A statement was also issued by the Chief Liaison Officer which we reproduce here: -

"It is with the greatest dismay and regret that I read the accounts of the shootings of members of the R.I.C. and British forces.

I have confidence that such deeds are not the acts of members of the I.R.A. but are the acts of cowardly individuals who endeavour to cloak their misdeeds in such a manner that they may be interpreted as actions of soldiers of the Republican Army.

Should it, however, be proved to be the work of members of the I.R.A., the General Staff have decided to take most drastic action against the perpetrators".

As we are concerned in this statement with the history of the 3rd Tipperary Brigade only, and do not wish to touch on the political situation as such, except in so far as it becomes necessary in order to explain the military situation, it will suffice here to mention the following facts.

A treaty was signed on December 6th, 1921 between representatives of the Government of the Republic of Ireland and representatives of the British Government. This Treaty, which recognised Ireland's position as a Dominion of the British Empire, and likewise accepted the fact of Partition, received the approval of Dáil Éireann on January 7th, 1922, by the small majority of seven votes. With the vote on the Treaty the period of national unity came to an end and the whole Republican movement was split from top to bottom.

Following the approval of the Treaty, President de Valera and his Cabinet resigned from office and Mr. Griffith was elected President of the Republic in succession to Mr. de Valera. A new Cabinet was formed in which all the members were men who had voted for the Treaty and were, consequently, pledged to work in the Dáil for the disestablishment of the Irish Republic and the substitution in its stead of the Irish Free State, a British Dominion, owing allegiance to the British Crown.

This state of affairs had a disastrous effect on the Army, the morale of which had already been much lowered during the long period of the truce, and the discipline of which had been not a little impaired. To the split in the nation was now added a split in the Army, with this difference; that whereas the majority of the people seemed prepared to accept the Free State, at least as the most which could be hoped for at the time, the majority of the Army was violently

opposed to it, and the Army leaders, particularly in the South and West, made it quite clear that they were prepared to resist its imposition on the people by force of arms if necessary.

The question of the Oath to the Republic now agitated men's minds to a considerable extent and inevitably the Army was drawn into the political controversy. It soon became apparent that a section of the Army, at least, was prepared to repudiate the authority of Dáil Éireann. This section held that Dáil Éireann by approving the Treaty had acted in a manner ultra vires and had violated its obligations to the Republic and so forfeited the right to the obedience of the Army. It was also pointed out that, constitutionally, the Army was independent of the Dáil, being under its own Executive, though it had admittedly agreed to come under the authority of Dáil Éireann once that body had been constituted as the de jure Government of the Irish Republic, elected by the free votes of the Irish people. On the other hand, it was argued that the Army had now been for two years subject to the Dáil and working under the Ministry for Defence, and that all the Volunteers had taken an oath of allegiance to Dáil Éireann as well as to the Republic.

To the Army officers who opposed the Treaty the all-important issue was the issue of Republic versus Free State or, to put it in another way, of Dominion status versus Sovereign Independence. To accept the Free State envisaged by the Treaty was, to their mind, to violate their oath of allegiance to the Republic, surrender the proclaimed independence and sovereignty of the nation and accept the status of British subjects - the very thing against which

they had been fighting for the past three years. Worse still, it meant in their eyes the acceptance of Partition.

Though the rank and file of the Irish Republican Army were undoubtedly Republican in sentiment and prepared for the most part to resist any attempt to subvert the Republic, there was a large section, including a majority of the G.H.Q. staff, who wished to accept the Treaty as "a stepping stone to the Republic". The attitude of this important and influential section was made manifest in an article which appeared in An tÓglach in January, 1922, shortly after the election of Arthur Griffith to the Presidency of the Republic. This article is of such importance, and throws such a light on the attitude of the pro-Treaty section of G.H.Q. and, indeed, of all members of the Army who were prepared to accept the Free State that, in justice to that point of view, it deserves reproduction here: -

"Dáil Éireann, the sovereign representative body to whom the people of Ireland owe allegiance, has by a majority, taken a definite decision in a matter around which political controversy has raged, and the result has been the election of a new President and Cabinet. The situation as far as the army is concerned remains unchanged.

"Our army remains the army of the Irish Republic, which Republic will continue until such time, if ever, as the Irish people at a General Election shall decide on some other form of Government. The army will remain in command of the same officers as heretofore, and any attempt to impair its discipline and solidarity by introducing political controversies into its work will be sternly resisted. All who have the interests of the country and the honour and strength of the army at heart will co-operate in ensuring this.

The country is at the present time, as a result of the recent war, the later political divisions, and the proposed British evacuation in a chaotic state exposed to danger from foreign and domestic enemies of peace, and the great hope in this moment of need is the splendid discipline and ordered organisation which has characterised the Irish Volunteers.

The British forces are preparing to evacuate Ireland, the duty of securing public order and public safety will rest on the Irish army, and all its units must co-operate loyally in this work. Words are not strong enough to express the reprobation due to any officers or men of the army who in this critical juncture fail in their duty in this respect.

The Irish Volunteers were established to safeguard the common rights and liberties of all the people of Ireland. They are the servants and defenders of the nation, and can never be made the organ of a party or faction. No units of the army can ever be allowed to use force or intimidation in furtherance of their political views.

It must be clearly understood that those in control of the army will tolerate no indiscipline, no insubordination or mutinous conduct, no intimidation of civilians at the present time, and that they are prepared to take strong steps should the necessity arise. We do not believe that the necessity will ever arise".

In the foregoing article stress is laid on the fact that the people of Ireland owe allegiance to Dáil Éireann, the sovereign representative body. The force of this statement is, however, very much blunted when we consider that the majority of the members of the G.H.Q. staff at the time this

article was written were themselves members of a secret organisation which did not recognise Dáil Éireann as the de jure Government of the Irish Republic. The Irish Republican Brotherhood, to which they belonged, and to which they continued to belong even after the Irish Free State had been set up, recognised only one legitimate authority in Ireland until such time as the Irish Republic should have been not only established but internationally recognised. The one legitimate authority which this secret society recognised was its own Supreme Council whose decrees overrode even those of Dáil Éireann. The army itself had been brought under the control of this secret society, and every effort had been and was still being made to see that the effective control of the army would remain in the hands, not of the Dáil Ministry of Defence, but of the I.R.B. When reading and judging the foregoing article, we must always keep these facts in mind.

Reading between the lines we can see G.H.Q. already preparing the rank and file for the substitution of the Irish Free State in place of the Irish Republic, and the merging of the I.R.A. in the new Free State Army soon to be set up. Many things in the article are admirable in theory as, for example, the warning that any attempt to introduce political controversies into the work of the army would be sternly resisted. But the author of the article had apparently overlooked the fact that the circumstances in which the Irish Republican Army came into existence and continued to exist were not the circumstances found in the case of an ordinary military force.

The Irish Republican Army Volunteer could not be expected to view the political situation as if he were gazing upon it from some remote planet. Nor was it reasonable to expect the Volunteer to look upon the political situation as

something completely divorced from the military situation. It was all very well to warn Volunteers against mingling politics with the work of the army, but a heated political debate had just concluded in Dáil Éireann on the issue of the Treaty, in which two members of G.H.Q., one of them being the Chief of Staff, had taken up a very decided attitude in favour of the Treaty, while another member of G.H.Q. had taken a most uncompromising attitude in defence of the Republic and in opposition to the Treaty. In the Dáil at the time were many soldier deputies some of whom favoured acceptance and others rejection of the Treaty; and during the Civil War which followed, deputies fought on both sides. Under those circumstances it seems futile to speak of "no politics" in the army.

Commandant Seumas Robinson, the deputy for Waterford and East Tipperary, who was at that time Officer Commanding the 3rd Tipperary Brigade, very properly reminded the Dáil that the Volunteers had always held political views and that if they had no political outlook they would not have been soldiers at all. They were not a national army in the ordinary sense of the word; they were a citizen army and had political views as soldiers. In judging, therefore, the situation which arose in the army as a result of the signing of the Treaty, we must not lose sight of this fact.

The last paragraph in the article quoted from An tÓglach was clearly a threat directed against those in the army who refused to acquiesce in the abandonment of the Republic. These included the overwhelming majority of both officers and men in the martial law area. These, and they included the men of the 3rd Tipperary Brigade, looked upon language of the kind

we have quoted as a threat, and decided to direct all their efforts to safeguard the existence of the Republic and prevent its disestablishment. That they acted rashly in the means they adopted for the purpose of carrying out that policy cannot be denied. That they acted precipitately, involving themselves and others in unforeseen difficulties as a result may, perhaps, be admitted; but of the fact that they acted in good faith and in the sincere desire to preserve the independence of the Irish nation which they felt to be threatened by the proposed Treaty, there can be no doubt. Their methods may have been, and in some instances were, deplorable; but their motives can be questioned by none. That they were later prepared to lay down their lives in vindication of the principles for which they battled is, in itself, sufficient proof of this. For ourselves, we leave it to history to vindicate or to condemn their attitude and its results. We content ourselves here and in the chapters which follow with giving the facts.

There can be no doubt that by the summer of 1922 militarism had become rampant in Ireland, and that statement applies equally to both sections of the army; to those who favoured the Treaty as well as to those who opposed it. For proof of this one has only to read the incidents reported from day to day in the press of the period. The country was, indeed, falling into a state of chaos, and while the two parties wrangled and disputed in Dáil Éireann, the military situation got altogether beyond the control of the Dáil, and the warring sections of the army found it more convenient to use military than civil means to settle their differences. This was really the beginning of a slow drift towards civil war which, in spite of all the efforts made to avert such a calamity finally, and, perhaps inevitably, resulted.

The temper of the vast majority of both officers and men of the 3rd Tipperary Brigade was, as has already been remarked, strongly opposed to the acceptance of the Treaty and in favour of a renewal of the war, if necessary, rather than that the Republic should be abandoned. A proclamation was drawn up against the Treaty and sent to the Clonmel 'Nationalist' for publication. The editor refused to publish it and was thereupon warned by the brigade authorities that if it were not published the paper would be suppressed. The editor promptly laid the facts before the new Minister for Defence and received the assurance that steps would be taken to prevent interference with the paper. In spite of this assurance the 'Nationalist' was suppressed by the I.R.A. the machinery being dismantled. This interference with the freedom of the press called forth much criticism and helped to harden public opinion against the army.

Meanwhile the state of the country went from bad to worse. Bands of armed robbers, taking advantage of the political unrest and the unsettled state of the country, roved through the land and in many cases represented themselves as members of the I.R.A. Murders were committed in the belief that the crimes would be attributed to the I.R.A. and that the murderers would thus succeed in evading the toils of the law. The Republican Police were active in combatting these criminal activities, but in many areas it was found necessary to take more extreme measures and in some parts of the country it was even found necessary to proclaim martial law.

Thus it happened that, following the murder near Dundrum of John Barrer, a Protestant farmer, the Officer Commanding the 3rd Battalion, 3rd Tipperary Brigade, found it necessary to declare martial law in his area from Monday, January 30th,

1922. The area thus declared under martial law comprised the parishes of Knockavilla, Annacarty, Hollyford, Rossmore, Clonoulty and parts of Boherlahan.

The proclamation stated that: -

- (1) Any person or persons found in the possession of arms without a permit from the O/C of the said area will be liable to suffer the extreme penalty;
- (2) All publichouses to be closed between the hours of 9 p.m. and 7 a.m. until further notice;
- (3) All persons to be indoors between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m.;
- (4) All persons when called upon to halt by patrols shall immediately do so;
- (5) Any person who, owing to urgent business, must pass through said area within the above mentioned hours, can do so by having a permit from the O/C;
- (6) All citizens are asked to co-operate with the authorities in tracking down murders and robberies.

(Signed) TADHG Ó DUIBHIR,

O/C Battn. 3, I.R.A.

The evacuation of the military and police barracks in South Tipperary commenced in late January. The smaller country police barracks were the first to be abandoned and in most cases the I.R.A. took over when the police had departed. In late January and early February, the police barracks at Bansha, Dundrum, Annacarty, Limerick Junction, Cahir and Carrick were evacuated and the police who remained were concentrated in Clonmel and Tipperary while awaiting demobilisation.

The smaller military posts were also evacuated and the garrisons transferred to the larger barracks. Clogheen was evacuated on January 25th, and on the 29th the 42nd Brigade, R.F.A., of which the Clogheen garrison had been a unit, evacuated Cahir military barracks. This was the first major military post to be evacuated in Tipperary. Immediately after the evacuation of Clogheen and Cahir by the British

the local units of the I.R.A., attached to the 6th Battalion, marched in, and the tricolour of the Irish Republic floated where formerly the Union Jack was seen.

Events moved quickly from now on. One unit of the R.F.A. still remained in Fethard. On the night following the evacuation of Cahir military barracks, the magazine in Fethard barracks was raided and a large quantity of ammunition and two Lewis guns removed almost under the nose of the sentry. The material captured on the occasion was removed to Burgessland near Newcastle, where it was dumped. This raid was, of course, a flagrant violation of the Truce.

Soon after the raid just mentioned, Fethard military barracks was evacuated by the British and the 1st Battalion, 3rd Tipperary Brigade, entered into occupation of the building. The evacuation of this barracks was quickly followed by the handing over of Clonmel infantry and artillery barracks, on which occasion some difficulty arose between the representative of the Provisional Government and the representative of the army of the Republic, involving correspondence in the press.

It had been announced in the Clonmel 'Nationalist' that the barracks in Clonmel had been taken over by the I.R.A. in accordance with an arrangement entered into with the Irish Provisional Government. This statement led to a repudiation of any such agreement by Commandant Patrick Dalton, Officer Commanding the 5th Battalion, in a letter addressed by him to the editor of the 'Nationalist' and published in that paper on February 13th, 1922. The publication of Commandant Dalton's letter produced a reply from Staff-Captain McKenna, the representative of the Provisional Government, asserting that the actual taking over of the barracks was done by him

on the authority of the Provisional Government. We
reproduce the correspondence here: -

"Headquarters, 5th Battalion,
3rd Tipperary Brigade.

13th February, 1922.

"To the Editor of the 'Nationalist'.

You will kindly publish the following in the next
edition of your paper.

In your issue of last Saturday, February 11th,
1922, the following passage occurs in the article headed
'Passing of the English Occupation' - 'The actual taking
over of the barracks was done by arrangement with the
Irish Government by Commandant Dalton and Vice-Commandant
Morrissey.'

I take this opportunity of contradicting such a
statement. No arrangement of any kind has been entered
into with the Irish (Provisional) Government by me for
the taking over of the vacated barracks. In taking
over the barracks I, as Officer Commanding the 5th Battalion,
acted solely on instructions received from my officers.

(Signed) P. DALTON,

O/C, Batt. 5, Clonmel.

In the same issue of the 'Nationalist' in which the
above appeared there is to be found a reply from Captain
McKenna. The item is as follows: -

"After receipt of the above letter from Commandant Dalton,
our representative interviewed Staff-Captain McKenna on
the matter. He stated: 'The actual taking over of the
barracks was done by me on the authority of the Provisional
Government. I then handed it over to Commandant Dalton'.

Captain McKenna added that he gave his signature to the British O/C of the barracks and also took an inventory of the stock".

These two contradictory statements may, indeed, be reconciled. It is certain that Commandant Dalton, in taking over the barracks at Clonmel, acted solely on the instructions of his superior officers in the 3rd Tipperary Brigade. But it is no less certain that every barracks in Ireland handed over to the I.R.A. at that time was handed over by arrangement with the Provisional Government. This arrangement was made not by the local unit or units engaged in taking over the barracks but by G.H.Q. in Dublin who were working in co-operation with the Provisional Government and whose policy it then was to hand the barracks over to the local Volunteers even where it was known that the local O/C did not see eye to eye with G.H.Q. regarding the attitude to be adopted on the Treaty question.

What the state of the country was at this time may be judged from the fact that the Commandant of Tipperary No. 2 Brigade found it necessary on February 7th, to issue a proclamation declaring the parishes of Drombane, Upperchurch, Inch, Ballycahill, Castleiney, Moyne, Templetuohy, Loughmore, Clonmore, Drom, Templemore and Killea to be under martial law on and from the 9th February, because of recent outrages in the brigade area. The proclamation declared that anyone found in possession of arms without proper authority would be liable to suffer the extreme penalty. It also introduced curfew and prohibited the use of motor cars within the hours of curfew except by permit.

Within a few days of this proclamation, the Officer Commanding the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Tipperary Brigade, felt obliged to make a similar proclamation for his area as from

February 13th, "owing to the numerous acts of lawlessness, destruction and commandeering of property" which were taking place. The area affected by this proclamation included the parishes of Kilfeacle, Golden, New Inn, Cashel, Dualla and Ballyfowloo, and the terms of the proclamation were much the same as those we have already quoted.

On the 16th and 17th of February the last detachments of British troops left South Tipperary when the military hutments and military barracks in Tipperary town were evacuated. After the departure of the British Army the barracks and hutments were occupied by the Irish Republican forces and the Irish tricolour hoisted. Three years had barely elapsed since, in February, 1919, the leaders of the 3rd Tipperary Brigade had ordered the British forces, under pain of death, to leave South Tipperary. That proclamation was derided by all the pro-British elements in the country and denounced by the "moderate" nationalists as a piece of folly. It was regarded with exasperation by the "sensible" element of the population which simply could not contemplate the possibility of a few ill-armed men challenging successfully the military might of England, backed as it then was by all the resources of the world-wide British Empire. But the prophets of disaster lived to see themselves confounded and the "impossible" achieved. The events of February, 1922, proved that the "sensible" people were wrong and the "foolish" right. The British army was gone and the barracks once held by the English troops were now in the hands of Irish soldiers.

In order to meet the requirements of the Republican troops and to finance the army which was still an unpaid volunteer army, levies were being exacted in the name of the Republic, while seizures of goods in lieu of levy were

authorised in certain cases as, for example, in the case of people who did not contribute to the upkeep of the army. This custom had grown up during the previous year when the war against the British was at its height and had never been discontinued. It now became irksome to the people at large and led to a good deal of resentment. The official Army journal, "An tÓglach", stated (in February): -

"Reports have reached G.H.Q. to the effect that levies are being exacted in the name of the Irish Republican Army in the Clonmel and Carrick-on-Suir areas. It is necessary to make it clear that no such levies have been sanctioned by G.H.Q. and that the exacting of levies in any form from the civilian population is entirely unauthorised.

Following this reminder, a proclamation was issued by the Officer Commanding the 3rd Tipperary Brigade to the effect that on and after February 19th all seizures or commandeering of motors or goods in lieu of levy in the name of the I.R.A. from people resident in the brigade area were illegal, and that the people should resist all such alleged seizures and report them to the O/C of the area.

One of the reasons for the exaction of the levy referred to was that the 3rd Tipperary Brigade, in common with all the other brigades of the 2nd Southern Division (except East Limerick), had refused to accept maintenance from the Provisional Government, since they would not recognise the authority of that body. Indeed they went further than that; they actually repudiated the authority of Dáil Éireann and of G.H.Q. They issued a proclamation in which they stated that the army established to maintain the Republic was determined to resist every power inimical thereto:

"The setting up of the Free State Government is inimical to the Republic. A majority of the Dáil and the G.H.Q. staff of the Army conniving at the creation of the Free State, the Government forfeited the allegiance of all citizens and soldiers. The Republican Army is determined to rouse the nation from its lethargy to resist the treacherous inclusion of Ireland in the British possessions. The orders and decrees of the Free State Government and Headquarters staff have no binding force on the people".

Such was the state of affairs when, on February 26th, a coup was brought off which startled the country and dismayed the Provisional Government. This was the raid on the R.I.C. barracks in Clonmel which resulted in the capture of a huge quantity of arms and ammunition by the Republican troops. The operation was carried out by picked men drawn from each of the eight battalions of the brigade. Four men with their O/C were ordered to come to Clonmel from each battalion to take part in the raid. In addition to these, members of the garrison in Clonmel military barracks were engaged in the operation.

The police garrison at the time of the raid consisted of about seventy men who were awaiting demobilisation. The raid took place near midnight on Sunday and was carried out with the connivance of some of the police. The general body of police in the barracks knew nothing of the intended raid and were, not unnaturally, very indignant at this flagrant breach of the Truce, they themselves having faithfully abided by the terms of the Truce since it came into operation the previous July. The police were lined up in the day room awaiting the roll call when the raiders entered.

Most of the arms had been bundled up already in readiness for transference to Dublin, so that the raiders had little difficulty in gathering the spoils.

According to a statement made by Mr. Churchill in the House of Commons following this raid, the captured material consisted of 11 motor cars, 293 rifles and guns, 237 revolvers, 45 shotguns, 324,000 rounds of ammunition, 4,247 cartridges, and sundry small stores. According to an estimate made by Lieutenant Seán Cooney, Engineering Corps, 5th Battalion, the quantity of material taken was as follows: - 273 revolvers and pistols (including Webley, Colt-Automatic, Smith and Wesson, Parballum and Peter the Painter types), 300 rifles, 3 Lewis guns, 200,000 rounds of rifle ammunition (.303), 300,000 rounds of revolver (.45) ammunition, a large quantity of bombs, grenades, bayonets and equipment, 3 armoured Lancia cars, 12 Crossley tenders and one armoured car. Even accepting the most conservative estimate the haul was a big one.

Events in Tipperary at this time gave great cause for anxiety to the British Government and numerous questions were asked in the British House of Commons. Mr. Churchill declared that the condition of affairs in various parts of County Tipperary had been a source of anxiety to the Government and that representations had been made on the subject to the Provisional Government. On being pressed to take some action himself in the matter, Churchill said that he might easily take action which would be unwise and do more harm than good. He added, however, that he was supplying the Provisional Government with the means to assert their authority.

A still greater source of anxiety both to the British and to the Provisional Government was the ambush of R.I.C. men in the Main Street of Tipperary town as they were leaving the town in four cars for Dublin where they were to be demobilised. As soon as they were attacked the police returned fire. The Head Constable was shot dead and four other constables were wounded, one of whom had to have his leg amputated and died subsequently. The police were relieved of their arms and ammunition. The officer in charge of the attackers had the wounded men conveyed to Limerick Junction and saw them off to Dublin. Three policemen were afterwards arrested in Dublin for complicity in this affair. That such an attack could have occurred at a time when the police forces were being demobilised and during what was supposed to be a truce is sufficient indication of the chaotic state into which the country had drifted.

As the split in the army developed, the Provisional Government began to organise a "regular" force in contradistinction to the Volunteer force which now began to be dubbed, at least in a tentative way, "irregular". This regular force was still the Irish Republican Army legally and constitutionally, functioning under the authority of the Dáil, for the Provisional Government had no authority under the law of the Irish Republic, or, for that matter, under the British law, to raise an army. Nevertheless, this new force, though nominally under the control of Dáil Éireann and still called the Irish Republican Army (every recruit signed an attestation form which declared him to be a soldier of the Irish Republic), was in fact under the control of the Provisional Government to which the new Dáil Cabinet seemed to be handing over all its powers so that the Provisional Government was becoming in fact the Government of the country and Dáil Éireann but a debating society

Attempts were made to organise the new force - as we may truly call it - in Tipperary, but, at least in South Tipperary, these attempts met with little success as far as the Volunteers were concerned. Some of the Volunteers did, indeed, join the "regular" forces but these were a small minority. The pro-Treaty forces, seeing how the situation was developing in the south, determined to bring the recalcitrant divisions around with strong pro-Treaty garrisons and, for this purpose, strove to get pro-Treaty units into key points such as Kilkenny, Templemore and Limerick. Soon a major crisis developed in the last named city.

It had been arranged that the British troops would evacuate the various Limerick city barracks on February 23rd. Up to this it had been usual for barracks to be taken over by the local units who might be pro-Treaty or anti-Treaty. As the whole of the 1st and 2nd Southern Divisions (with the exception of East Limerick) had definitely ranged themselves against the Treaty, it now became the objective of G.H.Q. to see that in those areas no more barracks should be handed over to local units, but that men from pro-Treaty areas should be drafted in so that there would be no danger of any more barracks falling into the wrong hands.

This new policy was explained in the Dáil by the Minister for Defence as follows:

"In the matter of handing over barracks for occupation by local Volunteers, the fact that the local O/C might not agree with our policy had not been allowed to make any difference; even to the extent that where in the Tipperary No. 3 Brigade there was very definite indiscipline on the part of the Brigade Staff and serious interference with local persons and

property, barracks were handed over to the local troops in the hope that with responsibility placed upon them the rank and file of the army in that area could be relied upon to exert an influence sufficiently strong to reduce that indiscipline. When the barracks in Limerick came to be occupied on the 23rd February the position was such that this policy had to be departed from".

The reason for the change of policy was this. On February 18th, five days before the barracks were to be handed over, the O/C Mid-Limerick Brigade issued a proclamation in which he declared that his brigade no longer recognised the authority of the then head of the army (Eoin O'Duffy) because "the aims of the head of the army and the majority of its G.H.Q. Staff are now unquestionably to subvert the Republic, support the Provisional Government and make possible the establishment of the Irish Free State".

Following this declaration, the nearest O/C of the "Dáil" forces was instructed to occupy the barracks in Limerick city. Meantime, Captain Hurley, the Brigade Q/M, who was in favour of the Treaty, was ordered to organise a local pro-Treaty force in Limerick. Before he could do so he was placed under arrest by the anti-Treaty forces and held for four days. Pro-Treaty troops entered the city and took over all the barracks but one which still remained in British hands. Finally a situation was reached in which a jail and a hospital as well as seven barracks were held by pro-Treaty troops from outside areas, while reinforcements from the South and West poured into the city in hundreds to strengthen the Republican troops. The leading hotels were occupied by Republican troops, among whom were units of the 3rd Tipperary

Brigade, one section of which, from Clonmel, was billeted in a Mental Home.

The situation on both sides was so acute that the leaders in Dublin took alarm and a conference was held with a view to seeking an agreement. Liam Lynch and Oscar Traynor travelled post haste to Limerick to try and avert what promised to be a major calamity - the beginning of civil war. After prolonged and difficult negotiations an agreement was reached. All troops which had been brought in from without were withdrawn while the barracks which had been evacuated were to be occupied by maintenance parties drawn from the Mid-Limerick Brigade.

The General Convention of the I.R.A. was to have been held on March 26th and had already been summoned by Commandant-General Eoin O'Duffy, Chief of Staff, when suddenly, contrary to all expectations, it was prohibited by President Griffith. It was feared by Griffith that the Convention would repudiate the Treaty. The preliminary Brigade Convention which had been held for the purpose of electing delegates to the General Convention showed that from seventy to eighty per cent of the army opposed the Treaty. This foreshadowed a decisive anti-Treaty vote at the General Convention and for this reason, probably, it was decided to prohibit the holding of the Convention altogether.

The Republican section of the army now decided to go ahead and call the Convention on their own account in defiance of both the Government and G.H.Q. This step was taken when it was evident that the pro-Treaty section was determined that the Army Convention would not be allowed to convene. Following this announcement by the anti-Treaty section, the Minister for Defence ordered that any officer attending the Convention would ipso facto cease to be a member of the army.

On March 23rd a manifesto was issued summoning a General Convention for March 26th. The manifesto was signed by fifty senior army officers. Two hundred and twenty delegates attended, representing forty-nine brigades. The Convention re-affirmed allegiance to the Irish Republic and set up an Executive in which they vested the supreme control of the army.

The new Executive appointed an Army Council which was headed by Liam Lynch as Chief of Staff. The officers and men of the 3rd Tipperary Brigade gave their allegiance henceforth to the army Executive. Ernie O'Malley, the Officer Commanding the 2nd Southern Division having been appointed Director of Organisation on the Army Council, his place as O/C 2nd Southern Division was taken by Brigadier Seumas Robinson who was succeeded as O/C of the 3rd Tipperary Brigade by Commandant Dinny Lacey, Commandant Paddy Dalton, O/C 5th Battalion, becoming Vice-Brigadier, while Commandant Jack Lonergan became O/C 5th Battalion in place of Commandant Dalton.

Divisional as well as Brigade and Battalion Headquarters were now located in Clonmel military barracks which became a hive of activity. A brigade proclamation issued on April 3rd stated that any persons found in possession of arms or ammunition after the 5th of April without a permit from the Commandant of the Battalion area in which the said person resided would be liable to a heavy fine and to have the arms confiscated.

The new Executive had ordered that all matters relating to the army should in future be subject to military censorship before appearing in the daily press. An intimation to this effect was served on all editors in the brigade area immediately this order was made. On and after the 11th April, therefore, all the newspapers in the brigade

area were, to that extent, censored by the I.R.A. and the editors generally saw to it that the public were informed of that fact by a notice in the papers.

At this period there was an orgy of murders in Belfast and other parts of the north-east corner of Ireland. Catholics, men and women, and even little children were being done to death in circumstances of almost unbelievable barbarity, and this in spite of the pact entered into between Sir James Craig and Michael Collins. The Dáil Cabinet had removed the Belfast Boycott but the Army Executive now decided to enforce it in a drastic manner, and orders were given to the effect that all troops under the command of the Executive were to enforce the boycott in their respective areas. All traders were ordered to observe this prohibition. The boycott was very strictly enforced in South Tipperary. Traders were informed that permits could be had to dispose of goods purchased before April 2nd, 1922, but that no permits would be issued to sell boycotted goods paid for on or after the 10th day of April, 1922, a notice to that effect appearing in all the local papers, signed by the Brigade Director of Boycott, Tom Smyth.

On April 13th the Republican Army Council set up a military G.H.Q. in Dublin and for this purpose occupied the Four Courts. Everything now pointed to a rapid deterioration of the military situation and it was felt by responsible men that unless a supreme effort were made to save the situation nothing could avert civil war. Official negotiations between the two sections of the army had failed to secure agreement; so had the efforts of Dáil Éireann. Some private conversations now took place between army officers on both sides. A basis of agreement was found which, in the end, satisfied neither party and was repudiated by the Republican

G.H.Q. in the Four Courts. The agreement had no official sanction from either side but represented an attempt made by individual officers to avert a civil war which, they believed, would be fatal to all Ireland's hopes. The agreement ran as follows: -

"We, the undersigned officers of the I.R.A., realising the gravity of the position in Ireland, and appreciating the fact that if the present drift is maintained a conflict of comrades is inevitable, declare that this would be the greatest calamity in Irish history and would leave Ireland broken for generations.

To avert this catastrophe, we believe that a closing of the ranks all round is necessary. We suggest to all leaders, army and political, and all citizens and soldiers of Ireland, the advisability of a union of forces on the basis of the acceptance and utilisation of our present national position in the best interests of Ireland, and we require that nothing should be done that would prejudice our position or dissipate our strength.

We feel that on this basis alone can the situation be faced, viz.: -

- (1) The acceptance of the fact, admitted by all sides, that the majority of the people of Ireland are willing to accept the Treaty;
- (2) An agreed election with a view to
- (3) Forming a Government which will have the confidence of the whole country;
- (4) Army unification on above basis.

(Signed)

Dan Breen, Tom Hales, H. Murphy, S. O'Hegarty,
F. O'Donoghue, Seán Boylan, R.J. Mulcahy,
Owen O'Duffy, Gearóid O'Sullivan, Micheal Ó Coileáin

On May 3rd the officers who had signed this agreement were received by the Dáil and Seán O'Hegarty addressed the House in moving terms. A Committee of Dáil Éireann was appointed to consider and discuss the proposals submitted by the officers and the result of all the efforts was the Collins-de Valera Pact which for the moment held out the hope that Republican Ireland might be re-united on the basis of the agreement then signed. And so it might, perhaps, had not the British Government intervened and made it clear that they would never tolerate a united Coalition Cabinet in which the Republicans would have representation. The rest of the story is well known. The Pact was broken by the pro-Treaty party and the country rushed headlong into civil war.

While the events we have been narrating were taking place in Dublin the situation in the South was unchanged. Recruiting for the "Regular" forces of the I.R.A. - under which name the nucleus of the Free State Army was being formed - was prohibited in the 3rd Tipperary Brigade area, and a number of Volunteers who were alleged to be about to proceed to Kilkenny to join those forces were placed under arrest in Carrick and Clonmel and lodged in Clonmel barracks.

The G.H.Q. of the "Dáil forces" had appointed Tom Carew, former Brigade I/O, to the position of Brigadier in place of Commandant Dinny Lacy who, they held, had forfeited his position as one who had rejected the authority of G.H.Q. and Dáil Éireann. Carew was instructed to organise a pro-Treaty force in the brigade area but was unable to do so, so that any of the South Tipperary Volunteers - and they were few - who joined the new force did so in Kilkenny where they remained until the advance of the Free State army on South Tipperary in the following August, when they were organised as the

3rd Tipperary Brigade in the Free State army with Headquarters at Clonmel.

During the negotiations in Dublin a conflict had occurred in Kilkenny between the Free State troops stationed there and the local I.R.A., and for a few days things looked critical. When news reached Tipperary of the Kilkenny fighting great excitement prevailed, and soon great military activity was apparent in Brigade Headquarters in Clonmel. Shortly after 9 p.m. on May 2nd, several lorries filled with armed troops entered the military barracks and later went off in the direction of Kilkenny. During the night and up to the early hours of the morning, lorries continued to pass through the town in the same direction, each lorry carrying its quota of armed men. There had been trouble in Annacarty just before this, and the men returning from Annacarty found themselves hurried off pell-mell to Kilkenny.

The trouble in Annacarty had originated in an attempt to occupy the police barracks there on the part of the pro-Treaty troops under the command of Commandant Tom Carew. The barracks was occupied without any trouble, the men there being favourable to the Treaty. Carew placed a garrison of about twenty men in the barracks, but they were scarcely settled down when the place was invested by Republican troops drawn from all over the brigade area.

On the night of Saturday-Sunday, April 29/30, fire was opened on the barracks by the Republicans. During the attack Commandant Tom Carew was wounded, as were also three of the garrison. There were no Republican casualties. The garrison surrendered on Tuesday, May 2nd, the prisoners being removed to Clonmel barracks where they were detained for a few days and then released. Commandant Carew himself was taken to a Tipperary hospital. All the arms, ammunition

and equipment in the barracks fell into the hands of the I.R.A. The attacking party was commanded by Tom Lynch, Brigade Adjutant, and the surrender was taken by Commandant Michael Sheehan. Lieutenant Seán Cooney was in command of the Clonmel contingent.

On returning to Clonmel the troops were ordered to Kilkenny where, as has been said, fighting had broken out. Dinny Lacy took command of the motorized column of about two hundred men. The first encounter with the enemy took place at Cuffe's Grange where a Republican machine-gunner had the Lewis gun shot out of his hand when he came under the fire of a Free State armoured car manned by Joe Leonard of the Dublin Guards. The cessation of hostilities was now announced as a result of an agreement reached in Dublin first between officers representing both sides. These officers, including Dan Breen, Seán Moylan and Gearóid O'Sullivan, came to Kilkenny and then proceeded to Callan, where the terms were put before the men in Hayden's Hotel. These terms allowed the I.R.A. to retain certain posts in Kilkenny and were accepted by them as satisfactory.

The Kilkenny affair being settled, the prisoners taken on both sides were released. Meanwhile labour troubles had broken out in Tipperary in common with other parts of Ireland, and the workers who had been denouncing impartially the militarism of both Free Staters and Republicans now decided to set up little soviets of their own all over the South of Ireland. Amongst other undertakings, Cleaves Creameries and Condensed Milk Factories were taken over and the Red Flag hoisted. When the farmers refused to deliver the usual supplies of milk to the creameries after the new regime had been set up, the workers in Carrick, Clonmel and Tipperary

attempted by intimidation to compel them to do so and also tried to prevent them selling their butter to the shopkeepers in those towns. Not content with that, they even tried to prevent the country people holding their usual weekly butter market in towns like Clonmel. As a result of this, disorderly scenes were often witnessed in the towns of Tipperary during this period. On one occasion, indeed, conditions became so bad in Clonmel that a detachment of the I.R.A. from the military barracks had to fire several volleys over the heads of the raging mob before order could be restored.

Commandant Dan Breen eventually intervened in the Clonmel dispute and invited both parties to attend a conference under his chairmanship. The conference having assembled, Commandant Breen made certain suggestions which, if agreed to by Dáil Éireann, would form the nucleus of a temporary arrangement. This suggestion was adopted by both parties. In other areas, however, especially in Tipperary town, the Red Flag regime refused to come to any terms with the proprietors of the creameries and the dispute dragged on until the evacuation of the town by the I.R.A. when the fine creamery was reduced to ashes by incendiaries. As the I.R.A. were mentioned in some of the newspapers of the time as being the people responsible for the destruction of the creamery in Tipperary, it may be well here to deny categorically that the I.R.A. had anything to do with its destruction which was solely the work of the supporters of the Red Flag regime.

Chapter 11.

Civil War (1) - From June, 1922. to Fall of Clonmel:

In the early hours of Wednesday morning, June 28th, British guns were placed in position round the Four Courts in Dublin and at seven minutes past four the Free State army commenced the bombardment of the building. The Civil War had commenced. The following morning screaming headlines in the English papers announced: - "Collins shells the rebels; Collins makes good".

The day following the attack on the Four Courts, Harry Boland, T.D., came to Clonmel seeking assistance and a column of 125 men was sent to Dublin immediately. This column was under the command of Michael Sheehan and was drawn from every battalion of the 3rd Tipperary Brigade.

On July 1st, another motor column under the command of Brigadier Lacy left Clonmel for Kilkenny with the intention of attacking that city which, being a key position, was used as a base of operations by the Free State army under Colonel-Commandant Prout.

The situation in the South was that the whole of counties Cork, Kerry and Waterford, the greater portion of County Limerick, the whole of the South Riding of Tipperary and a large portion of Kilkenny were held by the Republican forces. The City of Limerick was occupied by both armies. Thurles was held by the Free State forces, and so was Kilkenny. The aim of the Free State army at this period was to free Limerick City from Republican control and, having cleared the Republicans from the city, advance south from there while other columns were advancing from Thurles and Kilkenny on Tipperary and Waterford. They aimed at turning the Republican

flanks at Limerick and Waterford, and had also determined on landing troops by sea in the rear of the Republican forces.

The column which left Clonmel under the command of Michael Sheehan proceeded by way of Waterford, New Ross, Enniscorthy, and along the coast to Blessington where they met the South Dublin Brigade columns who, having burned their barracks in South Dublin and Wicklow, had obeyed Commandant-General Traynor's order to proceed to Blessington, there to meet the columns of the Eastern and Southern Divisions which were proceeding to the relief of Dublin.

The united forces advanced on the city under the command of Ernie O'Malley, Officer Commanding the Eastern Command. They proceeded as far as Crooksling, where they got word from Commandant-General Traynor that the fighting had ceased in Dublin. The Republican forces now retired on Blessington. Here the Tipperary column was divided into three sections; the first section of which, under Commandant Martin Breen, went over the Dublin mountains to the city. The greater portion of the twenty or twenty-one men who made up this column was captured near Kingsbridge by Free State forces.

The second section consisted of about nine men under Captain Bill Tobin and a few local Volunteers. These were placed in fighting positions outside Blessington on the city side. While there, four of the men (Bill Tobin, Ned Carrigan, Tom Condon and Bill Donnell) made a raid on Naas and captured a motor car containing two officers. At daybreak of July 4th the Free Staters attacked the Republican positions, approaching under cover of the bracken and mountain heather, and evidently intending to capture the positions by surprise. They were observed, however, and fighting ensued which lasted

till midday when the Republican column withdrew through Co. Wicklow to Glenmalure and Glendalough.

The column reached Glendalough on July 9th and billeted at Richardson's Hotel. A Free State column appearing, the Republicans retired and proceeded south to Aughavannagh where they billeted at Captain Redmond's place. That was on Sunday. On the following day they were brought to the local O/C - Commandant Blake - who procured motors at Tinahely and conveyed the column to Bunclody where the men rejoined the main Tipperary column under Michael Sheehan.

Sheehan's column had remained with the men of the Eastern Command under Commandant-General O'Malley, and on retiring from Blessington had proceeded south to Enniscorthy taking the castle and the Free State military barracks after one and half day's fighting. During this fight the Wexford Volunteers suffered some casualties. The war material captured included 28 rifles, 1 Lewis machine-gun, 13 revolvers, 2,000 rounds of rifle ammunition, 36 hand grenades and 10 shotguns.

Proceeding from Enniscorthy the column took Ferns and Borris barracks and placed a garrison in Bunclody. At Ferns they captured 28 rifles, 400 rounds of .303 ammunition, 40 grenades and 37 shotguns; while at Borris the booty was ten rifles, 630 rounds of .303 ammunition and 11 grenades. The column later proceeded in the direction of Waterford for the purpose of relieving that city which was being besieged by the Free State army under Col.-Commandant Prout. For the present we will leave it in Bunclody and return to Clonmel to see how the motor column fared which left for Kilkenny under Brigadier Dinny Lacy.

Lacy's column consisted of about two hundred men, mostly from the 3rd Tipperary Brigade, but it included a contingent of troops from the 1st Southern Division (Cork No. 2 Brigade) under the command of Vice-Brigadier Dorney Regan. The Cork contingent had left Fermoy military barracks on the evening of Saturday, July 1st, and numbered forty men all told, including the O/C. Other officers who travelled with the column were Captains Dick Smith, Liam Kearney, Jack Lane, and Lieutenant Leo Skinner. It is interesting to note that this contingent from the 1st Southern Division remained in Tipperary during the whole period of line fighting in July and early August and was reinforced by other units of the same Division including not only Corkmen but even Kerrymen; and this notwithstanding the general plan adhered to by the Chief of Staff that each unit should operate in its own locality and that no units should pass from one Divisional Area to another.

It was after midnight when the combined columns left Clonmel. They reached Callan in the early morning and after a short rest proceeded towards Kilkenny. The column travelled in Crossley tenders, lorries and private cars. One lorry contained a ton of high explosive for use in demolition operations. Having circled part of Kilkenny city the column retired to Cuffe's Grange without making any attack. Word had come that Templemore was threatened by an advance from Dublin and Lacy was ordered to go to its relief.

The column now took the road to Ballingarry and after a short delay there proceeded to The Commons. Templemore was not entered at all. A halt was called at Templetuohy where the column was allowed to rest. The people of Templetuohy received the men very hospitably and treated them to tea in the village hall. The men were billeted in the village and

in the surrounding districts that night. On the following day, Tuesday, July 7th, the column mobilised once more in Templetuohy and proceeded towards Urlingford with the intention of attacking the barracks there which was held by a Free State garrison under the command of a certain Captain Holland.

On the way to Urlingford detachments were sent off to occupy various positions in the bog country. One outpost established at Lisduff Cross (a Cork unit) captured four enemy officers, including an important I/O, who came from the Kilkenny direction in a motor car. An outpost set up at Longford Pass bridge had a brush with the enemy. A Crossley tender carrying some Free State soldiers approached from the Urlingford direction and was fired on by No. 1 machine-gun section. The enemy forces abandoned the tender and took to the country, one man being taken prisoner. The others succeeded in making their way back to Urlingford. The Crossley was taken by the I.R.A.

That night Urlingford barracks was attacked and surrendered early next morning. The garrison maintained a stout resistance for some time and Commandant Tom Bellew's group distinguished themselves in the attack, approaching to within a few yards of the barracks and using hand grenades. All the defenders, numbering twenty-two, were disarmed and taken prisoners after the surrender. Some of them had been wounded during the fight. Eighteen rifles were captured as well as some revolvers and whatever ammunition was in the barracks. After the garrison had surrendered and all war material had been removed from the barracks the building was burned to the ground.

The Republican troops now left Urlingford and moved back towards Longford Pass, carrying their prisoners with them. A halt was made at the publichouse near the bridge, locally known as "Mary Willie's". Here the column "fell out" and some of the men went in to have a drink. Meantime the transport, led by Mick O'Keefe, turned up the road towards Templetuohy. Several of the lorries and cars had gone up the road when the leading driver, not altogether sure of the way, pulled up to ask a countryman who happened to be passing. Hardly had the transport halted when a withering fire was opened from the high ground beyond the road and from behind the turf stacks in the bog by Free State forces who, coming to the relief of Urlingford and finding that they were too late, had waited to ambush the Republican forces as they returned. A number of vehicles had gone some distance up the road towards Templetuohy before fire was opened. Those who were in the cars immediately jumped to the ground, and sought what cover was available in the cuttings on either side of the road. The country there is bleak and desolate, affording very little cover, and the wonder is that the entire column was not wiped out. Certainly, had the whole column gone up the road, and had the enemy held his fire a little longer, or even had his markmanship been a little better, few of the column would have returned alive from Longford Pass that day.

The Volunteers who were standing outside the publichouse or sitting on the wall by the roadside were taken completely by surprise when the attack commenced. After recovering from their initial surprise, however, they got under cover as best they could and returned the fire. Some of the men were in a small corrugated iron shed near the publichouse. The bullets came whistling through and the men lost no time in seeking alternative quarters. The shed is there to this day and the bullet holes can still be seen.

Brigadier Dinny Lacy showed the greatest coolness and courage under fire that day. Climbing over the wall he came out on the road in full view of the enemy. He walked up and down the road with his hands in his pockets and laughed as the bullets whistled around him. One of the prisoners shouted in admiration: "By G , Dinny, you are a man! I will do anything you tell me". Some of the prisoners even asked for guns to fight on the Republican side. When Lacy had taken stock of the situation, he ordered his men to cease fire and then got his machine-gunner into action. One of the men serving with Regan's column afterwards described the scene:

"The machine-gun was mounted on the bank behind us, over our heads, and Lacy then ordered the gunner to fire: 'Range your gun for 400 yards', said he, 'and fire nice and even so as not to waste the stuff'. The machine-gun was behind us and firing over our heads so that we had to keep down to avoid getting hit. If the Staters missed us there was always the danger that our own machine-gunner might get us. The Free State bullets were hitting the road between us and the machine-gun. Two other things I remember well in connection with that fight. One was Dorney Regan, our O/C, standing at the door of the pub firing away with his rifle. The other was Dinny Lacy strolling up and down the road with his hands in his pockets and looking completely unconcerned while the road was swept by bullets and the sounds of rifle and machine-gun fire re-echoed on every side".

Dinny Lacy then called for Volunteers to drive away the cars. This was a very dangerous task as the cars were on the bog road and the drivers had to move up under a most intense fire, with practically no cover. Each car had to be

cranked, backed down the road to the cross, and there turned, under fire, before it could be driven away. Not one man refused to go up under fire and get his car back.

"The Clonmel lads", said an eye-witness, "behaved splendidly that day and deserve the greatest praise for their brave bearing under a sustained and raking fire from rifles and Lewis guns". Indeed all the men behaved splendidly and the 3rd Tipperary Brigade leaders had reason to be proud of them. Many of them were only in their teens but they proved as cool under fire as veterans. The Corkmen also deserve their meed of praise, and the bravery of their Brigadier, Dorney Regan, called forth admiration from all. Bill Quirke, who was wearing a steel helmet, started every lorry and car. Lacy then called upon the men to come out and extend. All the men rose and went down the road. It was at this moment that Paddy English of Rehill ('K' Coy., 6th Battalion) was hit by an enemy bullet. The wound was mortal and poor English died in a few minutes. Another man was wounded also but not fatally. All the prisoners taken at Urlingford escaped in the general confusion, nor did the column make any attempt to recapture them. The fortunes of war gave them the opportunity of making off and the Republicans would have done the same in similar circumstances. As soon as the lorries and cars had been got out on the main road again the troops got in and the whole column moved back to Ballingarry.

While these events were taking place in Tipperary and Kilkenny, the Field General Headquarters of the Republican Army had been set up in the New Barracks in Limerick city. Negotiations were entered into with the Free State Commander (Michael Brennan) for a truce and fighting ceased for a time in Limerick city. However, when the Provisional Government

heard that their commander in Limerick had agreed to a truce, they drafted fresh troops into the city and general fighting took place towards the end, and with the arrival of the heavy guns from Dublin the barracks and other buildings held by the Republican forces were no longer capable of being defended, the main strongholds being battered down by artillery fire. This decided the issue and the Republican forces began to withdraw. Before evacuation, all the barracks held by the I.R.A. were burned and the city was evacuated at midnight, says a contemporary account, "to the accompaniment of exploding mines and the lurid light of a ring of blazing buildings".

Field General Headquarters were now transferred to Clonmel military barracks and the fight against the advancing Free State army was directed from there. Here the Chief of Staff was joined by Eamon de Valera who had been appointed Adjutant to the Director of Operations, Comdt.-General Seán Moylan. Reports having been received that Free State troops were concentrating in Thurles with a view to advancing either on Tipperary or Clonmel, it was decided to occupy Thurles and orders to that effect were issued from Field General Headquarters.

Tipperary, Cork and Kerry columns took part in the advance against Thurles. Lacy's columns, which, after the fight at Longford Pass had retired on Ballingarry, had afterwards gone to Killenaule where they remained for a few days. Here they received orders to advance on Thurles and did so via Ballinure. The columns moved in the night, and it was dark and raining heavily as they marched.

The Corkmen also received orders to proceed to Thurles. They left Killenaule, accordingly, and directed their steps towards Horse and Jockey. Their O/C had already left for

Cashel, having been appointed to the Cashel Command. The Corkmen had had some friction with the inhabitants of Ballingarry before leaving that locality. On the morning of their departure from the village they - at least some of them - had indulged in a little looting, entering shops and compelling shopkeepers to supply them with various articles. When Dinny Lacy heard of this he was furious. Calling the men together, he compelled them at the point of the gun to disgorge the looted goods and to return everything to the lawful owners. Dinny Lacy was a soldier and a very upright and straight man, deeply religious, and would never stand for anything like that.

To return to our story: The Cork column left Killenaule on Sunday evening, July 9th, marching in extended order on both sides of the road, and reached Laffansbridge, where they halted for a time. They then continued on their march to Ballytrasna, coming out on the main Cashel-Littleton road at Ashill, and there dispersing to their billets. A relief party arrived from Fermoy about this time and a number of the men left for Cork, being replaced by the fresh men. Leaving Ballytrasna they marched to Littleton via Horse and Jockey, and from Littleton they continued the march to within about three miles from Thurles. As they left Littleton a Kerry column marched in.

Thurles being partially invested, the combined columns now attempted to occupy the town. The attempt failed dismally, partly, no doubt, owing to the confusion which existed and which caused a Kerry column to allow itself to be surrounded and captured by a Free State column which it thought to be a Republican one. Many of the men on both sides wore no uniform, and those who did wear uniform on either side, wore the same grey-green uniform and were unable to distinguish friend from foe as a result. But there was

another reason. The Republican columns, which had been trained to guerilla warfare, were utterly unable to adapt themselves to line fighting. Moreover, at this opening stage of the war they had no heart for the fight. They did not want this war of brother against brother which had been more or less forced on them by British policy. Many of them, indeed, had been hoping that war would have been declared by their leaders on the British forces in Ireland, thus ensuring the re-uniting of the Irish army sundered by the Treaty and averting the horrors of civil war. Not until a much later period, when bitterness had come into the struggle on both sides, after the death of Michael Collins and the adoption of the policy of executions, did the war become really bitter on the Republican side.

After the Thurles debacle, Field General Headquarters were removed from Clonmel and established at Fermoy. This sudden removal was due to something like panic. The Republican leaders apparently thought that the Free State forces would advance immediately on Clonmel after the failure to capture Thurles, and the whole G.H.Q. Staff was shifted out of Clonmel almost overnight. De Valera, who had moved to Fermoy with the others, felt that the Second Southern Divisional Commander, Seumas Robinson, was not being fairly treated in being left behind in Clonmel with all the responsibility on his shoulders in face of the coming attack; he therefore asked, and received, permission to return to Clonmel and the Tipperary front.

When de Valera returned to Tipperary he found that the barracks in Cashel had been burned and the town evacuated by the Republican forces. This he felt to be a great mistake. Since the war broke out, town after town had been evacuated by the Republicans. This was bad for the morale of the

troops and seemed to many to be an admission of defeat. De Valera now determined that he would hold Cashel and try to prevent any further advance on the part of the enemy. For the Free State forces were advancing through County Limerick towards Tipperary. At the same time, large forces from Kilkenny advancing through the Walsh Mountains had reached Waterford, though they had not yet succeeded in occupying the city. Meanwhile the Republican forces in occupation of the city had raised the bridge across the Suir to prevent the attackers gaining access to the city by that route. The Free State commander bombarded the city from the heights behind the railway station on the north bank of the Suir and on July 26th portion of the city on that side of the river was occupied.

It was now determined to attack the Free State forces in the rear. Tipperary, Kilkenny and Cork columns were to combine in carrying out this operation. Commandant Dinny Lacy was given general command of these columns which were under the sub-commands of Commandants Kennedy and Sheehan (Tipperary) and Commandant Jim Hurley (Cork).

The columns advanced through Carrick, Piltown and Mooncoin, leaving small parties behind them in these places for the purpose of checking any advance which might be made in the rear. A reserve of about one hundred men under Commandant Dan Breen was located in the Mullinahone-Windgap area, and this force was to move up to Hugginstown and remain there while Commandant Hurley's men were to cut the road between Kilkenny and Waterford to prevent reinforcements from Kilkenny reaching the Free State troops at Waterford, and to leave the Republican troops from Clonmel free to get in on the right flank.

Commandant Sheehan's column was posted in Mullinavat, having returned from their expedition to Dublin and Wexford described earlier in this chapter. The Kilkenny columns had moved through Kilmoganny and Templeorum and contacted the Tipperary columns at Dunkitt. The success of the operation depended on taking the enemy by surprise and the greatest caution was necessary that no inkling of this plan should leak out. For this reason it was essential that no large bodies of Republican troops should be known to be in the vicinity of Waterford city. The troops were to move under cover of darkness and lie low during the day until the time for action came. Unfortunately, Sheehan's column could not resist the temptation of attacking a convoy of Free State troops passing through Mullinavat on their way from Waterford to Kilkenny. Concealment was now no longer possible. Realising the danger of an attack from the rear, the Free State commander did what he should have done long before. He moved some of his forces down the river and succeeded in crossing in boats and landing his troops at Faithlegg, about two miles below Waterford. This movement sealed the fate of the city and the Republican forces were compelled to withdraw.

The Republican forces now retired on Carrick. The withdrawal was made in an orderly manner, railroad and river bridges being systematically destroyed as the troops retired before the enemy. The Cork columns operating on the southern bank of the Suir now vacated Co. Waterford altogether and retreated to Fermoy and Mallow. In view of the worsening situation, Commandant Lacy was appointed to the Carrick Command, his objectives being defined (Operations Order No. 1, F.H.Q., 2nd Sth. Div.) as (a) the hemming in of the enemy in Waterford from the north side, co-operating with the 1st Southern Division which was to hem him in on the south side;

(b) the interruption of enemy communications between New Ross and Waterford by ambushes, by cutting and keeping cut the roads and railway lines, or by destroying engines, rolling stock, etc.; (c) the interruption of communications between Kilkenny and Waterford in the Mullinavat area and south of it towards Waterford city; (d) the maintenance of Carrick as a reserve base for transport, communications, etc., and the taking of every possible precaution to prevent the town and the post of Carrick falling into the hands of the enemy. In case the enemy should advance on Carrick with the purpose of capturing it, Lacy was instructed to oppose such an advance, and for this purpose he was to use the column under the command of Jack Killeen.

To carry out those instructions Brigadier Lacy had at his disposal three flying columns under Commandants Michael Sheehan, Andy Kennedy and Jack Killeen respectively. He had also the Carrick Company and any other local company within his zone of operations. As a general reserve he had the men of the Nine-Mile-House Command under Command Breen (O/C Operations in the Kilkenny Brigade area), those of the Cashel Command under Vice-Brigadier Regan (Cork No. 2 Brigade), and those of the Tipperary Command under Commandant Dalton (O/C 4th Battalion) who had his headquarters in Tipperary military barracks.

Considering that the backbone of the 1st Southern Division, namely the Cork contingents, were already evacuating Co. Waterford at the time Commandant Lacy received his appointment to the Carrick Command and that according to a dispatch from G.H.Q. to Comdt. Dan Breen, dated 24/7/22 @ 6 p.m. the Waterford city and county troops had vacated their posts without warning (a later dispatch dated 25/7/22 states that Waterford troops were supposed to hold a line from Portlaw to

Kilmacthomas but that in reality there was a number of them "knocking about there, not inclined to do anything"), and considering also that Waterford city was now in the hands of the enemy and New Ross far removed from Carrick with enemy garrisons in between; considering all this, it is hard to see what Lacy could have done except hold up the advance of the Free State forces a little longer; and that is exactly what he did.

When we consider that the enemy had 600 men in Waterford alone while all the armed forces under Lacy's command hardly exceeded 200 men, we can realise what a formidable task had been assigned him. Nor was he in a position to draw on all the nominal reserves which were supposed to be at his command. The men of the Cashel and Tipperary Commands had quite enough to do at the moment besides sending reinforcements to Commandant Lacy. Nothing seemed more likely, indeed, than that these Commands would have to appeal to Lacy himself to send reinforcements to them at any moment. The enemy was advancing south from Templemore and Thurles in the direction of Cashel and Tipperary and a report received from Cashel by Divisional F.H.Q. at Carrick on July 27th that 200 Free State soldiers were then operating between Clonoulty and Goold's Cross in the 3rd Tipperary Brigade area, implied so serious a threat on the Tipperary-Cashel front that not only Dan Breen, but even Dinny Lacy himself, was instructed to have all possible reserves ready to rush to Clonmel to support any part of their front that might be seriously attacked. What Lacy's reaction to these instructions was is not on record, but Commandant Breen has noted on the copy of the letter received by him from the Divisional Commander that he had no reserves to send anywhere, his reserve having been used up already.

In fact the situation on the Tipperary-Cashel front was becoming desperate as far as the Republicans were concerned. Killenaule and Ballinure barracks had already been evacuated, the men retiring on Cashel which was now held by a composite force of Cork and Tipperary Volunteers. Cashel itself had been evacuated as long ago as July 17th, but the men had been ordered to return there by de Valera personally. They had done so, and were now being threatened by Free State forces advancing from Thurles. These forces had already reached the Goold's Cross-Clonoulty area and soon afterwards Golden village was occupied by their columns. They included men from Thurles and Templemore and a number of the "Dublin Guards".

On Friday, July 28th, the Officer Commanding in Cashel decided to attack Golden and take the Free State garrison by surprise. Three columns were to take part in the attack. One, under Commandant Paddy MacDonagh, was composed of about thirty men, and this column was to enter by the road from Rockwell. Commandant Killeen was to lead his column from the Tipperary direction and Commandant Regan was to march in from the Cashel side. The timing was very bad. Jack Killeen and Dorney Regan arrived late so that MacDonagh had to attack alone.

The attack was led by an armoured Lancia car driven by Ned Dalton of Powerstown, and manned by Jack Aylward (with a Hotchkiss gun) and Larry Delaney, both of Clonmel. When the Lancia was being turned on the bridge, the engine "stalled" and the car ran against the wall or parapet of the bridge. The door of the car being jammed against the bridge, the crew were compelled to evacuate it over the sides and into the Suir. For suddenly, without any previous warning, a terrific hail of machine-gun fire spattered the column. Instead of being the attackers, the Republicans found themselves attacked. The

Free State troops had evidently been warned and had taken up positions to ambush the Republican forces. In a house dominating the road they had concealed a machine-gun, and Sergeant-Major Lennon, who was in charge of the machine-gun party opened fire on the armoured car as soon as it reached the bridge

As soon as the Republicans perceived themselves to be attacked by the enemy they got under cover and Commandant MacDonagh and his men opened a rapid fire in return which enabled the greater part of the column to get away. Several of the men got into a field and could not get out again without coming directly under fire. Here Jim Quirke of the 3rd Battalion and Tommy Kennedy of the 8th Battalion were shot dead, Quirke being killed instantly and Kennedy lived a few minutes after receiving the fatal wound.

In the meantime, Commandant Regan's column came up and marched right into the position occupied by the Free State troops, thinking they were the I.R.A. Practically the whole column was captured, 26 men altogether being made prisoners as a result of this unfortunate error. Commandant Regan himself escaped, however. A Free State officer having called on him to surrender, Regan threw his gun into the officer's face shouting: "Who would I surrender to?" and jumping a fence he got away. As for Killeen's column; it saw no fighting that day for the fight was over by the time it had arrived.

The Republican position in Cashel became hopeless with the capture of Golden by the Free State army and the failure of the Republicans to recapture the post. On the following Sunday Cashel was accordingly evacuated by all the remaining units of the Republican Army. The Corkmen retired to New Inn where they remained until the following Saturday (August 5th) when they were sent back to Fermoy.

At five o'clock on Saturday evening, July 29th, the Free Staters advanced from Golden to attack Tipperary town. Meanwhile Bruree in East Limerick had fallen to the Free State forces advancing from Limerick city, and Kilmallock was reported to be on the point of falling. The attack on Tipperary town was led by Commandant Jerry Ryan, styling himself Brigadier of the 2nd Tipperary Brigade, I.R.A. The fight raged all through the night, the garrison retiring in the direction of the Glen of Aherlow about dawn. The garrison was commanded at the time by Commandant Paddy Dalton, Vice Brigadier, formerly O/C of the 5th Battalion. He had been sent from Clonmel to Pallas as Acting Brigade O/C in East Limerick and transferred from thence to the Tipperary Command. Following the evacuation of the town the garrison formed themselves into a flying column and proceeded first to the Glen of Aherlow, then to Cahir, and from thence went to Fethard. Later on they left Fethard for Tullamaine and Clerihan, at which latter place the column was broken up and the men sent back to their own areas.

The enemy was now advancing on every front and gaining strength as he advanced. The people were everywhere welcoming the Free State army and volunteers were pouring in by the hundred to enroll in every town and village which fell into their hands. Too late it was realised by the Republican commanders that the attitude of their troops towards the people had resulted in defeating their own ends. An attempt was made to remedy matters in an instruction issued from 2nd Southern Division H.Q. in Clonmel military barracks on July 15th. This instruction stated, regarding the civilian population: "Officers must constantly keep in mind the fact that we do want the people with us, and that they deserve to be treated properly by us. Our behaviour towards them should and will be guided if we remember that we are real soldiers - not of the Black and Tan type".

This instruction, as has been said, came too late. It should have been issued six months previously. It was found necessary in view of reports which had been received by Commanders of the general conduct of the troops both from the point of view of discipline and of their attitude towards the civilian population generally. With regard to discipline, officers were enjoined to get a proper grip over the men and to enforce strict discipline. All reported misdemeanours were to be carefully and impartially inquired into and suitable punishment devised if the reports proved true.

On July 29th, the Free State forces began to advance from Waterford towards Piltown. A great concentration of troops took place in Mullinavat, the troops arriving by road and rail from Waterford and Kilkenny. Both road and rail bridges in this area had been demolished already by I.R.A. columns acting under the orders of Commandants Lacy and Breen. A general order sent out from Headquarters 2nd Southern Division for transmission to O/Cs of all units makes it clear that it very often happened that when roads, railways, bridges, etc., were destroyed, no provision was made to prevent them being restored or repaired by the enemy. This order reminded O/Cs that the permanent destruction of enemy communications was almost indispensable for their successful operations against the enemy forces.

In fact, the Republicans at this time were fighting a losing battle and many of the leaders themselves were quite aware of this. It has been stated by Commandant-General Tom Barry as a matter of historical fact, that when he took over from de Valera as Director of Operations he knew he was taking over a defeated army and said so; but somebody had to do the job. (Note: In a letter

See pag 25 Draft

As far as line fighting was concerned, the Irish Republican Army was certainly defeated from the very beginning. Never once did it take the initiative. The leaders thought all the time in terms of defence, never in terms of offence.

Commandants Lacy and Breen were now warned by the Director of Operations that Mullinavat was to be used as a base of operations against the South Tipperary area and they were asked to dispatch a section of good men to get as close to Mullinavat as possible, so that the enemy could be hit very hard if he attempted to move out in close columns. It was pointed out that Commandant Breen could co-operate with Commandant Lacy in these operations by trying to get a section to advance in the Hugginstown direction so as to watch and lie in wait on the Free State line of communications by Ballyhale. The suggestion was made that a mine or two exploded on the road by which the enemy travelled, or an ambush or two would, perhaps, slow up his movements a bit. These suggestions were not, however, carried out. The reason for this will appear in the next paragraph.

The order to Commandant Lacy here referred to was sent out at 12.30 p.m. on August 1st. Another dispatch sent out to Commandant Breen at 5 p.m. the same day and signed by Seán Fitzpatrick, Divisional Adjutant, has a footnote added in the Adjutant's handwriting: "Free State troops (10 lorries) at 'Three Bridges' about two miles outside Carrick". This indicates sufficiently clearly the reason that no troops were sent to Mullinavat by either Lacy or Breen to carry out the operation mentioned in the order already referred to. By the time the Commandants had received this order it was already too late to do anything. In fact, the Free State troops had left Mullinavat at 8 o'clock that morning and, consequently, all Lacy could do was to order the Republican

troops at Piltown to retire to new positions between that village and Carrick. The new line to which the three columns now retired stretched from The Three Bridges on the main road between Carrick and Waterford - near where the Lingaun joins the Suir - through Tinvane to Cregg on the Carrick-Kilkenny road. The total force under Lacy's command at the Three Bridges was about 100 men. Two other Tipperary columns held the Mullinahone-Windgap-Nine-Mile-House sector under Commandant Breen. These columns, under Commandants Tim Kearns and Tom Bellew respectively, numbered in all 72 men. A Kilkenny column attached to Breen's command also operated in this area under Commandant L. Condon, bringing the total force under Breen to 96 men. In case of a Free State break through, the Kilkenny men would retire into County Tipperary or Kilkenny - preferably the latter - while the Tipperary columns had instructions to retire in the direction of Clonmel.

The Free State army advanced on Carrick through the hilly country of South Kilkenny. They returned to the main road at Piltown which had already been evacuated by the Republicans. The Free State force numbered about six hundred men and was equipped with field pieces and trench mortars as well as with machine-guns. Besides the force under General Prout which advanced from Waterford, another force of about two hundred men advanced under Commandant McCarthy from Kilkenny via Callan and Mullinahone.

On Wednesday, August 2nd, fighting commenced at The Three Bridges and continued during the day along a front which was roughly semi-circular in shape, following the bend of the Lingaun river. There was a good deal of sniping during the night, and the next day a fight developed which raged with great intensity until the afternoon when the Republican troops

retired and the Free State army entered Carrick-on-Suir.

During the fight for Carrick, a party of the I.R.A. which held Tinvane House gave great trouble to the enemy. Finally a raking fire from rifles and machine-guns was directed at the house by the Free Staters, which fire was reinforced by an eighteen-pounder field gun planted in O'Donnell's farmyard. The wood near Cregg House, being also occupied by the I.R.A., came in for special attention on the part of the heavy gun. A determined effort made by Dinny Lacy to turn the right flank of the enemy failed. The columns engaged in that effort are best indicated by the shouts heard by the Free State soldiers of "Up Cork" and "Up Tipp".

As it was evident that the small Republican columns could never hope to hold their positions against such a formidable enemy, superior both in numbers and equipment, the leaders wisely decided to retreat. The Free State forces from Kilkenny, advancing through Nine-Mile-House and Windgap, were delayed sufficiently long to allow the main body of the Republican Army to withdraw from Carrick in safety. The columns holding the Nine-Mile-House sector then withdrew and the way was open for the Free State army to enter Carrick, which it did on Thursday afternoon, August 3rd. The total losses on the Free State side during the fighting before Carrick were two killed and five wounded.

The Free State forces, having rested a few days in Carrick, left that town early on Tuesday morning, August 8th, and advanced in two columns towards Clonmel. The enemy had received a large number of recruits in Carrick and the surrounding districts, and there were almost as many men without uniform as there were with uniform during the advance

on Clonmel, so great was the influx of recruits. Hence it was that the Free State commanders were always able to put fresh men into the field while the same small bodies of men, tired and exhausted, had taken part in almost every fight on the Republican side since the commencement of the war.

Though a general order regarding reliefs for forces operating in columns had been issued by the 2nd Southern Division H.Q., it was not always possible to carry out this order as there were not sufficient men in the ranks. Commanding Officers were instructed to arrange for regular reliefs for the men in the columns so that they should not become exhausted for want of rest. It was recommended that there should be at least two, and if possible three men for each rifle on active service, and that bases should be established for the mobilisation of these reliefs, who would also be available at once to man any rifles captured from the enemy. In many, if not in most cases, this order could not be complied with. In many Commands there was not a sufficient number of men for the number of rifles available; and the reports of some Column Commanders show that desertion from the column ranks was by no means infrequent in certain areas. (note: I have in mind reports from Kilkenny Brigade Columns).

As the Free State forces advanced through the country numerous arrests were made, and all known or suspected Republicans were swept into the enemy net, thus reducing the potential reserve from which the Active Service Units of the Republican Army could be recruited, and from which reliefs for the men operating in the columns could be supplied. It is a matter of historical fact that Michael Sheehan's column, for example, which left Clonmel for Dublin on June 29th, was still fighting on August 8th before Clonmel, and had been in

action continuously since the outbreak of the Civil War. We have the testimony of a letter addressed to Commandant Lacy from Field Headquarters to the fact that the men of Commandant Killeen's column were too tired for work, and that the Director of Operations was trying to get Lacy a section to replace them. From these instances it is evident that the Republicans were operating under very difficult conditions indeed.

The Free State forces advanced from Carrick, not by the main road, but by way of Ballyneale and Ballypatrick. The reason was, as General Prout afterwards said, because they had received information that the main road was fully guarded, and in parts mined, and blocked by blown-up bridges, etc. The Republican forces had taken up positions at Kilcash and Ballypatrick with the object of fighting delaying actions. It had already been decided to evacuate Clonmel as its defence would involve heavy street fighting with considerable damage to property and loss of life among the civilian population. The 2nd Southern Division H.Q. had already been transferred to Cahir in view of the imminence of an attack on Clonmel by the enemy.

Commandant Lacy's forces now held Kilcash and Ballypatrick while Commandant Breen had the Kilkenny columns on the eastern slopes of storied Sliabh na mBan, between Kilcash and Toor. A detachment of the Tipperary Brigade occupied the historic old castle of Kilcash as an observation post. The castle afforded an extensive view of the valley of the Suir and the advance of the enemy could be observed without difficulty. The Free Staters advanced in extended formation and, when they had come within range, fire was opened on them from the top of the castle. Lewis and Thompson guns, as well as rifles, were used on both sides, and soon the hills began to re-echo to the sounds of the heavy firing mingled with

the occasional booming of the field gun which had commenced to bombard the castle. A direct hit was obtained on the top of the building and the Republican outpost had to evacuate.

The main bodies of the opposing forces made contact at Ballypatrick and there was rather heavy firing for about half an hour, during which two prisoners were taken by the Free Staters. Some confusion was caused at this juncture owing to the fact that the majority of the Free State forces on the right flank were in civilian dress. Some of the Republican troops mistook them for Commandant Tom Bellew's column, but soon finding out their mistake, they opened a fierce and concentrated fire on the enemy. "The ground all round us was torn up with bullets", wrote a newspaper correspondent who accompanied Prout's army, "and how any of the men got safely back under cover was nothing short of a miracle".

An encircling movement was attempted by the enemy on a Republican column at Ballypatrick but it failed, the column retiring in the direction of Lord Ormonde's Lodge. There was good cover there as the place was wooded. The fighting raged fiercely until nightfall, when operations were suspended on both sides. The Free State troops billeted for the night at Ballyglasheen. The Irish Republican Army withdrew under cover of darkness and took up positions at Kilmore and Powerstown where it was intended to make a last stand before finally evacuating Clonmel.

On the following morning, August 9th, the Free State forces again commenced their advance through Templetney, moving around the base of Sliabh na mBan towards Thorney Bridge. Here a Republican outpost stationed at Stoke's house in Kilmore was surprised but, armed with a Thompson gun, the seven Volunteers fought their way out without suffering any

casualties. Preparations for the evacuation of Clonmel had already been made by the Republican forces and early on Wednesday morning the military and police barracks were set on fire, the two columns of smoke from the burning buildings being plainly seen by the Free State troops as they advanced along the road to Thorney Bridge.

The last delaying action fought by the Republicans took place near the railway line at Redmondstown. The Free State troops advancing from Kilmore came under heavy fire from the Republicans who were posted in strong positions on a hill to the south. The Free State advance guard coming into the direct line of fire, one soldier, Corporal Jack Kelly of Clonmel, was shot dead and another seriously wounded. The Free Staters were compelled to retreat under a withering fire; attempting a flanking movement they again came under such a severe fire that they were compelled to fall back a second time. No further progress was possible on the part of the Free State forces until the field gun had been brought up and the Republican positions subjected to a heavy and continuous shelling for some hours. Even then the enemy did not attempt a frontal attack on the Republican lines. A column under Commandant Tommy Ryan set out under cover, parallel to the railway line, and succeeded in reaching the outskirts of the town.

By this time the main body of the Republican forces had withdrawn into the town. The various columns which had taken part in the fighting since the commencement of the Civil War were now sent back to their own areas by Brigadier Lacy. These columns were instructed to operate as Active Service Units in their own areas henceforth. The only column now left in Clonmel was the 5th Battalion column which fired the last shots at the advancing enemy who entered Clonmel

between nine and ten o'clock on Wednesday evening, August 9th, 1922. Before leaving Clonmel the I.R.A. exploded the mines which had been laid on the bridges over the Suir. Only one bridge - "the "Old Bridge" - was substantially damaged.

The Free State troops divided into three columns and entered the town by three different routes. One column under Commandant Tommy Ryan advanced along the railway line. It had almost reached the bridge over the railway, east of King Street, when a Lancia car belonging to the garrison proceeding along the road from King Street, opened fire on the troops with a Lewis gun. The fire was returned, but there were no casualties on either side. The second Free State column entered by the Horse Pasture road and the third by the racecourse. The latter, advancing along Kilsheelan Street contacted the Republican rearguard and a brisk exchange of shots followed. A machine-gun party got into the workmen's plots near Davis Row from which they opened fire on the Lancia car already referred to which was now coming along the road from the direction of the military barracks, covering the retreat of the I.R.A. The car skidded and capsized while being turned, and had to be abandoned by its crew, one of whom was slightly injured. The crew got away carrying the machine-gun with them.

While this was going on the last men of the Clonmel garrison were marching out of the town over the Gashouse Bridge. As the Free State forces advanced along the Mall, Jim Nugent, the I.R.A. machine-gunner, lay for some time on the Gashouse Bridge firing towards the Mall. The Republican troops marched out of the town under the command of Mick Sheehan or Dinny Lacy and numbered about seventy men all told.

Chapter 111.

Civil War (2) - August to December. 1922:

Following the fall of Clonmel the Republican leaders decided to adopt once more the guerilla tactics which had already been used with such effect against the British. The large columns which had operated under Lacy's command in the defence of Carrick and Clonmel were now broken up and the Battalion Active Service Units were reorganised. Nevertheless, there were still in existence two large columns which in a manner approximated to Brigade Columns. One of those was commanded by Commandant Martin Breen and though predominantly a 4th Battalion column, it included units of the 2nd, 3rd, 7th and 8th Battalions also, and may, indeed, be considered to have been the Civil War equivalent of No. 1 Column of pre-Truce days. It consisted of sixty men and two machine-guns, being divided into four sections. The second large column was composed of men of the 5th and 6th Battalions and consisted of about seventy men with two machine-guns. This column, which may be taken as the equivalent of Column No. 2 of pre-Truce days, had a whole succession of commanders beginning with Jack Killeen who was Column Commander until his capture by Free State forces near Kilcash as he was on his way to attend a brigade meeting. After Killeen's capture the column was commanded for a short period by Commandant Paddy Dalton - "Big Paddy" as he was called the Vice-Brigadier, who was later killed in action at Donohill. He was succeeded as Column Commander by Tom Sadlier, whose brother, Commandant Dinny Sadlier, had been for a time O/C 5th Battalion and who was accidentally killed shortly before the Truce in 1921, and whose other brother, Mick, was shot while an unarmed prisoner by Free State troops near Cashel towards the end of the year. Tom Sadlier was succeeded by

Jim Nugent, who was Column Commander when the war ended. Both of the aforementioned columns operated on a fairly big scale and it will be convenient to designate them as No. 1 Column and No. 2 Column respectively, which designation we shall retain to the end of the book.

We shall now continue our narrative of the events of the Civil War in South Tipperary, keeping as closely as possible to the chronological order, and noting only the more important occurrences. Minor engagements and matters of local, rather than of general, interest will not be treated of here.

If the Free State authorities were under the impression that with the fall of the last Republican strongholds in Tipperary the war in that area had come to an end, they were soon undeceived. Already sniping of the Free State posts had been taking place on an extensive scale both at Carrick and Tipperary, and the same policy was now to be adopted at Clonmel. Hardly a day passed, indeed, in any part of the brigade area when Republican snipers were not busily engaged in "worrying" the Free State garrisons and keeping them continually on the alert; but this after all, was only a policy of pinpricks. A more aggressive policy was now to be adopted and the Republican forces were to take the offensive almost for the first time since the outbreak of hostilities.

The Rosegreen area had once more been selected as the Field Headquarters of the 3rd Tipperary Brigade, and from those headquarters Brigadier Lacy now directed a well-planned offensive against the forces of the Provisional Government. During the remainder of his life he was not content to direct operations from the comparative safety of his headquarters near Rosegreen, but he travelled ceaselessly from one end of the brigade area to the other, taking part in many fights with

the various columns and Active Service Units, now here, now there, encouraging his men, and leading them to attempt the most difficult and daring deeds by his own example; for it has been said of him that "no man ever experienced in a greater degree such an amount of continuous discomfort and physical peril than he: yet personal danger never once deterred him from doing his work. Nor did he ever enter into a conflict without selecting the most perilous position and enduring more than his share of danger".

Clonmel had fallen on August 9th; Fethard and Cahir had been taken without opposition on the 14th. In all these towns the local population extended a tremendous welcome to the incoming troops, and it was thus made quite clear to the Republicans that this new war would have to be fought without the help of the civil population; indeed, it would have to be fought in the face of a population for the most part bitterly hostile.

One of the greatest difficulties the British had to contend with in their fight against the Irish Republic was that of a hostile populace. The people were with the flying columns, and the people's resistance to British oppression and their active sympathy with the soldiers of the Irish Republican Army played no small part in the final victory. But now the boot was on the other foot. It was now the Irish Republican Army which had to contend with a hostile populace. It was now the Free State army which had the benefit of the people's sympathy and help. It was this, too, more than any other single cause, which brought victory to the Free State arms eventually. We may deplore this, but we have to recognise it as a fact.

On leaving Clonmel the Republican garrison - now reformed into a Flying Column - moved along the old Kilganey road to

Derrinlaur - the same road, according to some, along which Hugh O'Neill led his men when he left Clonmel for Waterford in May, 1650. Be that as it may, the column moved to Derrinlaur, in which district the men billeted for the night, moving the following night across the hills to the Nire, the next night again to Four-Mile-Water, and arriving at Grange near Knocklofty on Saturday, August 12th. Here word was received that the Free State army under General Proudf was to have a victory parade on the following day to SS. Peter and Paul's Church (Clonmel) to Mass.

A machine-gun section immediately set out for Scrouthea, arriving at their destination, which was almost directly over the Main Guard, Clonmel, about dawn. They remained concealed in the furze until near the time when the troops were due to march to Mass. As the soldiers, armed with rifles and preceded by a band, marched up Gladstone Street, fire was opened with the Lewis gun and pandemonium broke out in the street, soldiers as well as civilians throwing themselves on the ground or fleeing in all directions. Luckily no one was killed, though one man had a finger injured by a bullet. It may be remarked here that this attack carried out by the machine-gun section had no official sanction from either the Brigade or the Battalion or the Column Commanders. The fact is that the column was without a Commander at the moment, as though Commandant Jack Killeen had been appointed he had not yet taken up duty as Column Commander and the men acted on their own in carrying out the attack just described.

Following this attack great tension prevailed between the soldiers and some of the prisoners who were held in the Town Hall. Shortly after the firing, one of the prisoners cheered for his leaders and being ordered to draw in his head from the window, refused, whereupon he was shot dead by a sentry

An inquest was opened but fell through as the military authorities either could not or would not produce the witnesses whose presence was deemed necessary for the proper investigation of the shooting. These witnesses were fellow prisoners of the dead man, Volunteer Michael Condon, 'D' Company, 5th Battalion, a native of Aughavolomaun, Newcastle.

The machine-gun section responsible for the attack on the troops crossed into the Nire Valley the same day and billeted there that night. Next day they rejoined the column at Newcastle and the entire body left to meet young Condon's funeral which took place to the burial ground at Mollough. There was a large attendance of the general public as well as of Volunteers and other national organisations.

After the burial of Volunteer Condon the column moved into the Derrygrath area where it was soon in action in the first large-scale ambush of Free State troops since the occupation of South Tipperary by these forces. Cahir had been occupied two days prior to this ambush, that is to say, on Monday, August 14th. On Wednesday, a company of troops - described in the Official Free State account as units of the "3rd Tipperary Brigade" - under the command of Captain Mullaney, proceeded to Cahir for the purpose of reinforcing the garrison there. Information having reached the column that this party was about to proceed to Cahir, positions were taken up on a height over the Cahir-Clonmel road on the south side. There is a farmhouse situated on a hill some distance back from the main road, in the townland of Kilmurry and the parish of Derrygrath. Some of the column were posted in an avenue leading to this house from a byroad which leaves the main Clonmel-Cahir road not far from this spot. The main road was blocked, and the Free Staters took a circuitous route

through Woodrooff demesne, dismounting from the lorries and advancing through the demesne in extended formation.

Having arrived safely at the gate leading to the main road near the little church where the three British officers were executed more than a year earlier, the order was given to re-enter the lorries, and the troops were in the act of climbing in when the attack commenced.

Commandant Jack Killeen was in command of the attack. The attack was opened with a burst of machine-gun fire and then the riflemen poured volley after volley into the ranks of the Free State troops who, taken by surprise, were thrown into the utmost confusion. Taking cover as best they could, they returned the fire and soon the fight was raging furiously. The Column Commander called upon the military party again and again to surrender, but they refused to do so. So the fight went on for about an hour when Commandant Killeen finally gave his men the signal to retire. The Republicans suffered no casualties. The losses of the Free State party were three killed and nine wounded. The military party did not continue on their journey to Cahir but returned to Clonmel, bringing with them their dead and wounded. Coming so soon after the retreat of the Republican forces from Clonmel and the presumed military collapse of the I.R.A., this deadly ambush caused no small sensation amongst the citizens of Clonmel, the majority of whom were strongly Free State in sympathy and, no doubt, helped to impress upon the minds of the military authorities on the Free State side the unpleasant fact that the war was not yet over.

Clonmel at this time was practically isolated. The Free State troops were, to a certain extent, immobilised in the town and, owing to the activities of the I.R.A. in carrying out demolitions of bridges, roads, railways, and so on,

were unable to secure reinforcements. After the Derrygrath or Woodrooff ambush, the column had swept round to the east of the town and was now billeted in the Powerstown and Redmondstown districts.

On August 21st, 1922, information had been received through Intelligence Officers that a convoy was expected from Dublin and would arrive by the Killusty road. A large party was expected to arrive, including some high-ranking officers, and it was understood that this visit was connected with the organisation of the Free State army Intelligence Department. Whether because the information received by the I.R.A. was inaccurate or because some last-minute change was made in the plans, the large party which was expected did not arrive, but one of the Intelligence Officers, Colonel Frank Thornton, did arrive accompanied by a sergeant and three privates.

On receiving information that a large convoy was expected by the Killusty road, a site was hurriedly selected for an ambush by the Column Commander. The site selected was on the slope beyond Kiely's house at Redmondstown; it was about two hundred yards beyond the bridge which carries the railway over the road to Kilmore and about twenty yards beyond the turn towards Ballinvoher. It was decided to block the road by felling a tree. The tree had hardly been felled when a Ford motor car came along the road. Only a few of the column were in position when the car, containing five Free State soldiers, came along. The machine-gun section was actually beside the tree when the car appeared. The occupants of the car were immediately called upon to halt, but they were, in fact, already pulling up and were actually jumping down from the car, having seen the obstruction on the road. Both parties opened fire almost simultaneously. The whole affair was over in a minute. The driver and another soldier were mortally wounded, being literally riddled with bullets and

their legs actually reduced to pulp owing to the close range at which they were shot and the concentrated nature of the fire. Colonel Thornton himself was desperately wounded in the stomach, right arm, leg and back.

Being of opinion that they had only encountered the advance party, the attackers hesitated to approach at first, expecting every moment to see the main body of the enemy force drive up. Soon realising that there was only one carload, the Column Commander led his men up to where the wounded men lay on the ground. They found Thornton to be in a very bad way and believed him to be dying. Improvising a stretcher, four of the men carried the wounded officer to the nearest house (Kiely's) while one of their number, a doctor, rendered first aid. The men who helped to carry Thornton were loud in their praise of the wounded officer's courage, some of them declaring afterwards that he was one of the bravest men they had ever met. The Column Commander held up a passing cyclist and gave him a note addressed to the Free State Commander at Clonmel informing him that a wounded officer was lying on the roadside at Redmondstown and asking that an ambulance be sent out.

A passing priest (Rev. Fr. Warren, C.C., Gambonsfield) administered the Last Sacraments to Colonel Thornton and the two dying soldiers. The latter died shortly afterwards. The Republican troops helped to place the wounded Colonel in the ambulance when it arrived, and the Commander sent a message through the doctor to General Prout that he was sorry Colonel Thornton was wounded. The two uninjured members of the military party were taken prisoners and were kept for a few days, after which they were released. While in custody they were well treated and acknowledged this after their release.

The column now retired in the direction of Thorny Bridge and subsequently moved to the Killurney and Kilcash districts. (Note: Details have yet to be supplied as to the movements of this column between this time and September when it was engaged in another fight at Woodrooff. Perhaps the following relates to this column). On Monday, August 28th, a large convoy of Free State troops proceeding to Kilkenny was ambushed in the Killurney district near Mullinarinka Cross. The troops, who had dismounted from the lorries, were marching behind in extended formation when fire was opened on them shortly after dawn. The soldiers immediately took cover and an engagement ensued which lasted till about seven o'clock. The Free State forces claimed that a successful flanking movement on their part resulted in the capture of a number of prisoners among whom were mentioned Brennan and Cronin of Clonmel. One of the Free State party, a Captain Kelly, was wounded. During the encounter a military lorry skidded against a ditch and had to be abandoned as the engine was put out of action.

While these events were taking place in the Clonmel area the Republican forces were also in action north of the Galtees. A big ambush had taken place at Kilfeacle during the preceding week when, on Friday, August 18th, a force of Free State troops travelling from Tipperary to Thurles in three motor cars, a Crossley tender and a Lancia car, was attacked close to the old Moate. Brigadier Dinny Lacy was present and took command during the fight. Just as the enemy drove into the I.R.A. positions a shot went off accidentally. This was the signal for a general outburst of firing, the attack being opened at once by the Republicans. The enemy troops jumped out of their cars and took cover beneath the fences. The fighting was very severe and lasted for about an hour, during which machine-guns and rifles were used on both sides. Three Free

Staters, including two officers, were seriously wounded; one of the officers being Captain McCormack, O/C Thurles. Every one of the Free State cars, including the Lancia, was put out of action during the battle. The party was, in fact, threatened with annihilation and was in imminent danger of being surrounded when reinforcements arrived from Golden under Brigadier Jerry Ryan. The rear of the I.R.A. column was now threatened and Brigadier Lacy ordered a withdrawal. The Republican forces are said to have withdrawn so secretly that the two Free State parties, which had closed in on the spot where the column had been posted, kept up a fierce fire upon each other for a long time, each thinking the other section was the enemy. This confusion may have been caused in part by the fact that darkness had fallen before the fighting finished. The five damaged military cars were later towed into Tipperary town.

On Tuesday afternoon, August 29th, another party of Free State soldiers travelling from Tipperary was ambushed near the cross roads of Ballinahow about two miles west of the town. The attacking party held positions on the hills near the road. The troops jumped out of the lorries and returned the fire, but the attack did not last long, the Republicans withdrawing after a brief exchange of shots.

On the same day another ambush occurred on the Tipperary-Cashel road. The Free State troops, who were commanded by Brigadier Ryan in person, left their lorries and taking up positions by the roadside engaged the attackers, three of whom, says the Free State account, were taken prisoners, their rifles being also captured. The same troops were ambushed a second time on the return journey to Tipperary. This ambush, which occurred a short distance outside Cashel, was a disaster for the Republicans, the whole column being surrounded and

captured together with all its armament and equipment which included a Lewis gun, a Thompson gun and two cars.'

Meanwhile Killeen's column, which had been ranging the country from Sliabh na mBan to the Knockmealdown Mountains, was back once more in the Derrygrath area. This was one of the column's favourite spots for an ambush of the troops who were wont to pass regularly along the main road between Clonmel and Cahir. The immediate position for a fight was excellent, being an elevated one over the road on the south side; but in the event of any information leaking out as to the presence of the column or preparations for an ambush it could become a very dangerous trap, as it was closely surrounded by good by-roads along which the enemy cars could travel without difficulty unless the precaution had been taken of blocking or manning them beforehand.

On this particular occasion it was nearly a death-trap for the column, as preparations were being made for an ambush when the men were observed and information relayed to Cahir and Clonmel. It appears that a small party of Free Staters from Clonmel travelling in a Crossley tender escorted by a Lancia car had reached a point a little beyond Barne when they sighted portion of the column in the vicinity of Woodrooff. They immediately returned to Clonmel. Here preparations were made for the surprise and capture of the column and word was sent to the Cahir garrison to co-operate in the work. Four lorries packed with troops, a Crossley tender and two armoured cars left Clonmel with the purpose of rounding up Killeen's column while at the same time a large force of soldiers, including a machine-gun section, left Cahir to assist in the operation.

How the original Free State party from Clonmel got back to the town without being observed by the I.R.A. outposts at Woodrooff is hard to explain. We can only suppose that

either there were no scouts or sentries posted or else they were not on the alert. It was not only customary, but strict orders had been issued, that columns should be well protected and guarded against surprise attacks both when on the march and when billeted. Working parties and engineers, etc., were supposed to be provided with an armed guard when operating in areas of hostilities, and on this guard devolved the duty of taking every precaution for their safety. There must have been some laxity, therefore, in the observance of the customary precautions on this occasion, otherwise it would have been impossible for the Free State troops to have come in view of the column and got back to Clonmel unobserved.

However that may be the fact is that when the reinforced body of troops arrived later on they also succeeded in getting to close quarters with the Republican forces unobserved. Leaving the lorries, the main body of troops proceeded towards the Republican positions in extended formation. The aim was to surround and annihilate the column - and it very nearly succeeded. The main Republican force was stationed on the hill as on the previous occasion, but the Column Commander with a few men was down near the main road inside the wall in the lands belonging to Derrygrath House. This was a bad position as a by-road ran past it. No. 1 machine-gun section under Jim Nugent was on the left flank, on the hill, at a distance of about 300 yards south of the main road, while No. 2 machine-gun section under Jack Aylward was on the right flank, nearer to the road. The Column Commander was close to No. 2 section. It was intended to allow the Free State lorries to move into the centre of the position before opening fire. Unaccountably, no attempt seems to have been made to block or man the by-roads and boreens leading up to and behind the Republican positions, and this oversight was to have very serious results.

While the lorries were yet coming up the road and the column was awaiting the order to fire, a few shots rang out without warning on the right flank. A regular fusilade then commenced and it was soon realised by those on the left flank that something had gone wrong. The men on the right flank now perceived that the Free State forces had come up on foot and were behind them; besides this, armoured Lancias now came up the by-road and the position became extremely dangerous. Killeen ordered a general withdrawal. When the men had withdrawn some distance they discovered that portion of the Free State column had got behind them with the intention of cutting off their retreat. A section of the I.R.A. column thereupon entered the haggard of Heffernan's house on Cuckoo Hill and, taking cover behind a stone wall, opened fire on a party of Free Staters who were advancing in the direction of the house.

Meanwhile, Mr. Heffernan, not knowing that the Republicans were actually in the haggard, and fearing that he and his employees who were in the yard at the time might be killed, as the troops were firing on them, evidently mistaking them for the enemy, rushed into the house and waved a white handkerchief, calling out that the house was unoccupied. The Free State troops, seeing the white flag, as they thought, being waved by the Republicans rushed forward to take the surrender. The Republicans, on the other hand, seeing the Free Staters rushing forward as if to attack, and knowing nothing of the "white flag" incident, opened fire at close range with rifles and Lewis gun on the advancing troops. The leading soldier, Volunteer Hanly of Cashel, was shot dead during this encounter. *

* Much was made in the daily press of the mean and shameful tactics of the "Irregulars" in their treacherous use - or abuse of the white flag. Comdt.-General Robinson sent a protest to the Clonmel Chronicle which was published, and later another letter was published from Mr. James Heffernan (a supporter of the Free State Government) explaining how the misunderstanding occurred. In fairness to the Clonmel Chronicle it should be stated that when reporting the "white flag" incident it spoke of the "alleged" abuse of the white flag.

The situation now became most confused. That section of the column which had taken up positions in Heffernan's haggard managed to get away unperceived by the enemy, crawling one after another along a ditch in a cornfield. This section reached Nicholastown eventually without the loss of a man. Another section extricated itself with difficulty after some sharp fighting and got back to Lisnamuck. One man who had been sent forward by the Column Commander to find if they were being pursued when the main withdrawal commenced, returned to his position only to find that the Commander and all the men had disappeared. He, too, succeeded in making his way by devious routes to Lisnamuck, where he rejoined the others.

The fight had lasted about two hours and at one time it looked as if Killeen's column had fought its last action and was doomed to destruction. The Free State official version of the fight spoke of the action as a great success and claimed that several of the "Irregulars" were hit, one, at least, being seriously wounded, if not killed. Another account, printed in the Clonmel Chronicle, said that the "Irregulars" cleared off, "carrying with them their wounded"; and this account said that "at least two of the Irregulars are believed to have been killed". Pools of blood, we are informed, marked the positions from which the Republicans were driven, and there was much evidence, we are told, that would go to show that they had heavy casualties.

As a matter of fact, most of this was propaganda intended to cloak the fact that the great manoeuvre, designed to round up and destroy the Flying Column, had failed miserably in its objective. So far was the column from being destroyed that it was to fight another battle almost in the same place before many more weeks had elapsed, while in this very battle which was to have seen its final annihilation, it had broken

through the enemy encirclement and fought its way to safety without the loss of a single man and without sustaining a single casualty. . On the Free State side the losses were one (Volunteer Hanly) killed and one (Commandant Tommy Ryan) wounded.

On the same day as the Woodrooff fight just dealt with there was a flare-up at the other end of the brigade area when Limerick Junction station and the signal cabin at Grange crossing on the main line between the Junction and Dundrum were attacked simultaneously in the early hours of the morning. Tipperary town was also attacked, but as neither this attack nor the one on the Junction was pressed home it soon became evident that these latter were only feint attacks. Not so the attack on Grange crossing which was pressed with great vigour and which lasted a long time. The garrison, numbering fifteen men, left the shelter of the cabin, and taking cover behind stone walls near the railway crossing replied to the fire. Three of the garrison were wounded, one mortally, during the fight in which machine-guns as well as rifles were used.

On September 14th, No. 2 Flying Column lost its Commander Jack Killeen, who was captured together with some other officers as he was proceeding to Kilcash to attend a Brigade meeting. The Free State forces from Clonmel, Carrick, Fethard and Callan were engaged in big round-up operations at the time in the Sliabh na mBan districts and the mountain itself was completely surrounded by troops and thoroughly "combed". Numbers of prisoners were taken and a large amount of war material was also captured during these operations.

Following the capture of Commandant Killeen, the Vice-Brigadier, Commandant Paddy Dalton, came down to the Clonmel area to take charge of the column as a temporary arrangement.

"Big Paddy" as he was called by the men because of his fine physique (he was also affectionately known as "The Armoured Car" or "The Tank"), was no stranger to the men of No. 2 Column, having commanded the 5th Battalion for a period. It was under his command that the Irish Army marched into Clonmel barracks on the evacuation of the buildings by the British troops, and Commandant Paddy Dalton was well known in Clonmel to the citizens at large as well as to the Volunteers. Though Killeen was missed by the men of the column, all were glad to have Big Paddy back with them again and proud to serve under him. Unfortunately, he was not left long in command of the column. Early in October he was taken back to his own area where he met his death in action against the Free State troops.

Three days after the capture of Commandant Killeen the Irish Republican Army Executive met at Ballybacon. The men of No. 2 Column acted as sentries on the occasion. At this meeting an Army Council of five was set up by the Executive, viz.: Liam Lynch, Chief of Staff; Liam Deasy, Deputy Chief of Staff; Earnan Ó Máille, Assistant Chief of Staff; Tom Derrig, Assistant Adjutant-General, and Frank Aiken, O/C 4th Northern Division. It is worth noting that amongst the Army Executive which set up the Army Council were two members of the 3rd Tipperary Brigade, namely, Con Moloney, who at this time held the position of Adjutant-General, and Seumas Robinson, O/C 2nd Southern Division.

As a result of negotiations entered into between the Army and the Republican (political) Party later in the month, the Republican deputies, members of the Second Dáil met in Dublin on October 25th and reconstituted the 2nd Dáil Éireann as Parliament of the Republic. By unanimous resolution Eamon de Valera was appointed "President of the Republic and

Chief Executive of the State", and he, in turn, nominated twelve members of the Second Dáil to act as a Council of State. This Council of State was recognised by the Army as having the right to appoint a Cabinet which would be temporarily the Supreme Executive of the Republic until such time as the Parliament of the Republic could freely assemble or the people, being rid of external aggression should be at liberty to decide freely how they would be governed and what should be their political relations with other countries. The Council of State being set up in due course, the Army later issued a proclamation pledging to it its allegiance and support.

The next engagement of any importance in Tipperary occurred on Monday, September 18th, when a column of Free State soldiers numbering thirty-five men left Tipperary town and came into conflict with a detachment of the I.R.A. near Donaskeigh. Conflicting accounts of this fight are to be found in the daily press of the period, but all accounts agree in stating that the battle was of a fierce and sanguinary nature. The earliest account describes it as an ambush by a large party of "Irregulars" of a small party of Free State troops who were travelling in lorries and a Lancia car when they were attacked by Republicans with rifle and machine-gun fire. A more detailed account was later issued from Free State military headquarters in Tipperary.

According to this official version a column of thirty-five soldiers entered a house in Ballinard during searching operations in the Donaskeigh district. On proceeding up the stairs to search for "Irregulars" the leading soldier was fired at from a room and toppled down the stairs, knocking the man behind him. A third soldier, who was standing outside the door, was fired at from above and killed instantly. The military party then retreated from the house and took up positions around the house

outside. A fierce battle ensued which lasted for more than three hours. The Free State column was then obliged to withdraw owing to an attack from the rear. The Free Staters claimed to have wounded three Republicans during this stage of the fighting.

A new stage was now entered upon with the arrival of Free State reinforcements. The Republicans being outnumbered, now retreated, pursued by the Free Staters, and what is described as a running fight ensued. This fight lasted for a couple of hours, two of the I.R.A. party being shot dead, namely, Con Hanley of Donohill and a Volunteer believed to be from Hollyford. The Free State losses were given as one killed and four wounded.

On the same afternoon an engagement took place at Blackcastle when a large body of Volunteers was surprised by Free State forces under Staff-Captain Taylor. These troops had come out from Clonmel and were operating all over the Rosegreen area. When they advanced to attack the Republicans the latter opened fire and, after a brisk engagement, retreated to a hill above and to the rear of the house which they occupied. Here they took up positions behind a stone wall and poured a hot and heavy fire into the ranks of the attackers. Eventually the I.R.A. party was forced to retire, three of the men being taken prisoners, namely, Staff-Captain Jerry Fitzpatrick, John Lonergan of New Inn and P. Kiely of Clerihan.

Four days after this Free State troops from Dungarvan were ambushed near Caherbrack cross, not far from the Half-Way-House. The fight lasted almost an hour and three of the Free State soldiers were wounded. This Free State column from Dungarvan was part of a "combing" expedition sent out with two other columns, one from Clonmel and one from Youghal, with the purpose of making a thorough search of the hill country.

The column from Dungarvan was the first to come in contact with the Republican columns. Fire was immediately opened on the Free State column from the hills round about. The engagement lasted but a short time, the Republicans withdrawing over the hills just before the arrival of strong supporting columns of Free State troops from Clonmel and Youghal. These continued the operations in the hills, but though they "combed" the district thoroughly, they met with no success, not one Republican soldier falling into the net.

Better fortune attended another Free State column or columns operating from Carrick in the Brownswood district in Co. Waterford on September 27th. These columns contacted an Eight Battalion column and the fight which followed lasting about an hour, resulted in heavy losses to the Republicans who were compelled to retreat leaving thirteen men, including Captain Dinny O'Driscoll, in the hands of the enemy.

On October 2nd, the No. 2 Flying Column under Commandant Paddy Dalton proceeded to the Woodrooff district in consequence of information received. This information was to the effect that Free State columns were to converge from different directions on the Araglen area near the Cork-Waterford Tipperary border for the purpose of encircling and capturing a Cork column which was operating in that area. Among the columns expected to take part in this encircling movement was a force of Free State troops from Clonmel who were to proceed to Cahir, there to join one of the columns going to Araglen. Such was the information brought to the Column Commander and in view of this information it was decided to ambush the troops who were expected to leave Clonmel for Cahir on October 2nd.

The column had been billeted in Ballybacon when it was decided to carry out this ambush. The night previous to the fight the Column Commander left Ballybacon with Lieutenant Seán Cooney to inspect the position and to make arrangements for the laying of the mines. They were accompanied by some other officers, Jack Lonergan, O/C 5th Battalion, going along as guide since he was more familiar with that stretch of country than were the others. As there had been a few ambushes at Woodrooff already, it was decided to select some other spot this time, and the choice fell on a crossroads about a mile and a half beyond Woodrooff and about three miles from Cahir. Here the main road between Cahir and Clonmel is intersected by a by-road coming from the south - from Ardfinnan - and continuing north in the direction of New Inn. The crossroads which is in the townland of Knockagh is known locally as Mollkisheen or Mollisheen's cross. Here the ground to the north of the road lies at a higher level than the road while a fence runs parallel to the road. Here Commandant Dalton decided to have the main position. When the position had been decided upon - the men were to line the fence parallel to the road at a distance of about one hundred yards to the north of the main road - they went down to the main road to examine carefully how the mines could be best laid. One of the main considerations was the distance between the mines and the fence on the hill to the north, as the supply of cable was limited. This took more than an hour, but at last the O/C Engineers was satisfied that it would be possible to lay at least two mines in front of the main position.

The following evening was spent by the Engineers making preparations and the six engineers under the command of Seán Cooney left Goatenbridge with the mines loaded on a donkey's cart. With them marched a dozen men detailed by

the Column Commander to accompany the engineering party for protection purposes. The engineers and the protection party left for the scene of the ambush several hours before the main column as the holes had to be dug and the mines laid if possible before the column moved into position for the fight.

It was still dark when they passed through the village of Ardfinnan. From Ardfinnan they passed over a network of by-roads and boreens until they reached the boreen that meets the main Cahir-Clonmel road at Molkisheen's Cross. They waited in a derelict house near the position until the dawn of day. At the first grey streaks of dawn they left the house and were soon at the cross-roads. The guard now divided into two sections, one section going towards Cahir and the other towards Clonmel. Outposts and sentries were thus placed at either end of the ambush position, to the east and the west, about two or perhaps three hundred yards from the cross-roads so that the engineers should not be surprised or interrupted while engaged in their minelaying operations by troops coming from either direction.

As soon as the cart had reached the cross-roads the mines were unloaded, picks and shovels distributed and work started at once on the metalled surface of the main road, the men relieving one another in short shifts. Two holes were soon dug and channels for the cables cut as far as the fence. The mines and cables were then covered, all superfluous earth removed, and the road patted carefully with the shovels until it looked as level as it had been before mine-laying operations commenced. Handfuls of dust were then sprayed over the whole and the finishing touches were put on by dribbling a bucket of cowdung along the road over the mines. It was a perfect job.

The mines were almost ready and the cart had gone down the road in the direction it had come when the column at last appeared. The men marched up the boreen and across the main road to the positions already decided upon about one hundred yards from the north side of the main road behind the fences. The riflemen were lined along the fence which ran parallel to the road and a machine-gun section was placed on the left flank. This was No. 1 Section under Jim Nugent. The second half of the column was placed at right angles to the first, the riflemen lining the ditch which faced the road in an easterly direction, and No. 2 Machine-gun Section under Jack Aylward being placed on the right flank.

The mines had been laid but were not yet connected with the exploders when suddenly there came a rapid burst of firing from the outpost on the Clonmel side. It was the alarm. A Crossley tender filled with soldiers was approaching at a rapid pace and, on being fired at, put on speed with the intention, apparently, of flying through the ambush position. All the column was in position and every man well concealed except two of the engineers who were still on the road in full view of the oncoming "Staters". The two men, Seán Cooney of the 5th Battalion and Ned McNamara of the 6th Battalion, were in grave danger of being caught between both fires. Several men from the position above the road, casting all caution to the winds, shouted: "Seán, Seán, for God's sake get off the road"!

The two men on the road did not need to be told to get off. They were already sprinting down the boreen as fast as their legs could carry them towards an old cottage, seeking shelter from the hurricane of bullets which they guessed would soon sweep the road. The gate leading in opened in the centre

and was fastened by wire. Twice MacNamara, who was in front, drove against it with all his strength but failed to move it. Then both men jumped at it together. The wire fastening broke and the gate gave way so that the two men fell in together just as the two machine-guns and the rifles of the column swept the road in a deadly volley.

For the fight had started up at the cross. The two large mines not being connected did not explode and it was soon evident that the Free State party intended to drive straight ahead and get through the ambush. Nugent, sensing the situation, called on the men of the column to advance on to the road, firing as they went. In the first volley Captain Walsh, who was in command of the Free Staters, was wounded in the arm while the driver of the car, Patrick Lawlor, was badly wounded and lost control of the tender which skidded sideways across the road and came to a stop in the centre of the ambush position.

Captain Walsh now ordered his men to leave the lorry and engage the attackers from cover, and was himself in the act of getting out when he was shot dead. Some of the soldiers managed to throw themselves on the road and roll under the lee of the road fence. Many were wounded in the act of doing so. The heavy firing lasted but a short time; then there was a lull and the Republicans could be heard calling on the Free Staters to surrender. Suddenly all were silent. The Free State party had surrendered and the fight was over.

The second in command of the Free Staters, a Lieutenant Good, shouted as the column came up to take the surrender: "I fought in Easter Week, boys". It was alleged afterwards by the Free State authorities that this officer had been kicked while lying unconscious on the road. A number of men

who were present state quite emphatically that the story is a fabrication. The Lieutenant was not even wounded, much less lying unconscious. It was further alleged that the dead and wounded were stripped by the Republicans and the dead officer's private property looted. This has also been indignantly denied. It is admitted, however, that Buck O'Reilly, whose boots were in tatters as a result of the constant marching with the column took Lieutenant Good's fine pair of new yellow boots, offering him his own in return. Lieutenant Good declined O'Reilly's offer, needless to say. This is probably the basis of the charges of looting brought against the Republican troops on that occasion. It may be mentioned here, that it became quite a usual thing during the Civil War for the victors to take the boots of the vanquished as spoils of war, whenever the state of their own footwear indicated that an exchange would be appropriate. Of course the military equipment of the vanquished was always taken. The ordinary procedure in the case of a successful ambush in which the enemy surrendered was to disarm the soldiers and remove their equipment. This was done at Mollkisheen. It was also usual to burn the lorry. This was not done in this case as there were so many wounded who had no means of getting attention if the lorry were burned. The total Free State casualties were one killed and six wounded, two of the wounded subsequently dying.

The large convoy which was expected on this occasion did not come after all. Only one lorry of soldiers appeared. The officers who were ambushed were to have taken charge, it is said, of the column from Cahir which was to take part in the Araglen operations already mentioned. As a result of the ambush at Mollkisheen the Cahir contingent did not take part in that operation at all and so the I.R.A. column succeeded in getting away.

After the surrender at Mollkisheen, the rifles and equipment of the defeated foe were gathered up and the column retired in the direction of Newcastle. That night the men were very tired and almost unable to move. They had been marching and counter-marching up and down the country so often that they were feeling cross - and looked it, too - when they were drawn up for inspection in Fennessy's of Newcastle. Some of the officers were wondering how Big Paddy would deal with the men in their present difficult mood.

Paddy stood in front of the column. "Boys", he said, "I'm proud of ye". The men stiffened, and a softer look came over almost every face. "I know ye are very tired", Big Paddy continued, "but I don't think it wise to stay here; but if you wish it, here we stay". A shout went up from the crowd: "Lead on where you wish, Paddy, and we'll follow you". Paddy turned and went out the gate, the column filing after him. That was the way he handled men.

"Paddy was a grand man", said one of the column afterwards. "He would never hurt anyone or offend anyone unnecessarily. He was a huge man - 'The Armoured Car' he was called - and as brave as a lion. When passing through towns the people would turn about to look after him and the women used shout: 'My God, isn't he a fine man.' Paddy would be much embarrassed on such occasions. Huge though he was, he was very quiet, altogether different from his friend Martin - better known as 'Sparky' Breen, who was about five feet one inch in height, gay as a lark and brave to a fault".

There is a story told of Sparky and Paddy: One day during the Truce the two of them were walking down the street in some town in County Tipperary. Sparky, we may remark, was a little above Paddy's elbow. As usual, some of the women, on seeing Paddy shouted: "Glory be to God, isn't he a fine man!" Sparky nudged Paddy: "Which of us do they mean, Dalton?" he asked.

Inseparable in life, they were not to be separated in death. Killed in action within a few months of one another, they now rest together in the Republican Plot in St. Michael's Cemetery in Tipperary. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a n-anamann.'

Sparky Breen was leader of No. 1 Column from the beginning of the guerilla campaign in August, 1922, up to the date of his death in January, 1923. Whenever his column would fall in with No. 2 Column, Sparky would invariably come down the line asking "Where is Cooney"? Having found Cooney he would march with him for the rest of the day or night, telling stories and making all around him laugh - if things were quiet; otherwise, of course, it would not be allowed, as the columns marched in silence as a rule - and this was always the case when marching in hostile country or in areas where the enemy was acting - and no smoking was permitted.

Those two columns travelled a lot. No. 1 Column kept mostly to the northern side of the brigade area and No. 2 Column to the southern side. But they often travelled outside their own particular "beats" and even on occasion outside the brigade area altogether, as we shall shortly see. The No. 2 Column was accustomed to make a circle from the Nire into Newcastle, down to Clogheen and on to Ballyporeen and almost into Kilbeheny in Co. Limerick; across the Galtees, over the Suir at Knockgraffon, and up as far as Ballingarry and back by Sliabh na mBan. Often the Suir was crossed near Carrick and the column would retire into the shelter of the Comeragh mountains in Co. Waterford.

The No. 1 Column travelled through the Glen of Aherlow habitually and was wont to cross the Suir near Knockgraffon to come into the Rosegreen area and across by Drangan and down by Sliabh na mBan, but it was most at home in the Glen, in the area north of Slievenamuck and around by Kilfeacle. The

members of the flying columns learned to distinguish different parts of the country not only by the kind of land through which or over which they passed but even by the different kinds of "cranes" used in the farmers' houses to hang the pots over the fire. Three kinds of crane were met with corresponding to the different kinds of fuel used in different places: in some places turf was burned, in other places coal or timber, and in other places again culm balls. The flying columns used travel through rich grasslands and poor moorlands, over mountains and bogs, and deep into glens and valleys.

A member of a flying column could almost always be recognised - not only by the rifle and revolver which he usually carried, and the trench coat, bandolier and leggings which were part of his regular outfit, but also by the razor and toothbrush which he carried after the manner of a fountain pen, standing up in his breast pocket. Discipline in this matter was very strict, cleanliness was considered essential. A column man with a dirty or unshaven face was unheard of. All men used the large open razor as blades for the safety razor were not easily procurable. Some of the razors used by column men had a strange history. One officer attached to Battalion 5 used a razor which had once belonged to a Major of the Auxiliary Force.

It was no uncommon sight in the summer and early autumn - before the weather became too cold - to see the men of a flying column washing in a river or large stream. The usual procedure in such a case was for a man to swim out a bit, having borrowed a lump of soap beforehand, and lather himself with the soap, and then to swim about for a while. If a man were not able to procure a towel to dry himself he would simply roll in the grass. Shirts were washed by being immersed in the river and

soaped. When they had been wrung out they would be hung on a bush to dry. The men would then dress minus the shirt, but by the time the column was ready to parade the shirts were almost invariably dry. The Suir, Tar, Anner, Aherlow and Arra were often at the service of the columns in this way.

When billeted in a district columns on active service were required, as far as possible, to be billeted in mansions, these being presumed to be the property of persons hostile to the Republic. So states an order issued on July 24th, 1922, from Field H.Q. at Carrick. In practice, however, columns were generally billeted on farmers, and indeed, as time went on mansion after mansion was given to the flames by the Republicans, so that it would have been difficult to adhere to the instructions given in the said order. Nevertheless troops were billeted in mansions when possible and some mansions which escaped the ravages of fire continued to be used by the columns until the end of the war. One of these was the Earl of Donoughmore's residence at Knocklofty. The Earl, to use the words of an I.R.A. officer, "was not a bad skin", and whenever the columns called at his mansion there were always six or seven beds available and plenty of good food.

Another mansion or, rather, "Big House", where the columns occasionally billeted was Coole House, Knocklofty, owned by a Mr. Fitzgerald. On one occasion when a number of men from No. 1 Column billeted in this house an incident took place of a rather unusual kind. After breakfast, Mr. Fitzgerald, who did not support the Republican side in the Civil War but who laboured under the impression, apparently, that the majority of the fighting men were being led astray by unscrupulous leaders, brought the party of men who were billeted with him - a few men belonging to the machine-gun section - into the garden till they reached a very fine statue of the Blessed Virgin, before which he halted. Turning to the

men and taking a rosary beads from his pocket he said: "Boys, this is the Fifteenth of August, Lady Day; kneel down and we will say the Rosary". The men knelt down and, producing their beads, answered very devoutly the decades which were given out by Mr. Fitzgerald. When they had finished they blessed themselves and stood up. "Now, boys", said Mr. Fitzgerald, "I am going to make you a promise. None of you boys here present will be killed in this war". "All glory to Mary Immaculate" said the officer who related the story, "that promise was upheld".

"Mother of Christ, Mother of Christ, I toss on a stormy
 sea,
O, lift thy Child as a beacon light to the port where
 I fain would be".

When billeted on the people of a district the men frequently had to sleep three in a bed. Sometimes four men had to try and do as best they could with one bed, while two men in a bed was a luxury, and one man in a bed was almost unheard of. The men often had to sleep in dirty beds, but even a dirty bed was better, some thought, than a hay barn. In spite of such conditions no man on active service with the columns was known to suffer from insomnia though many developed what came to be known as "the Republican Itch". When marching during the night the column would fall out at intervals for the space of ten minutes or so, many of the men availing themselves of this interval to rest on their backs in the centre of the road (the grass on the roadside might be wet) while others preferred to stand. During the day time when the grass was dry it was usual to lie on the grass on such occasions and rest the legs as much as possible. Occasionally during daylight marches the more frolicsome men indulged in "sod battles" during these intervals, much to the irritation of some of the older and more staid members. These rest intervals were much appreciated by the men, one of

whom describes the luxury of lying on one's back on the road after a long march as "heaven". In spite of such conditions no member of a flying column was ever known to get a cold.

Most columns had a machine-gun section attached; some columns had two. The guns most in use were the Lewis gun and the Thompson gun. There were also some Hotchkiss guns. The gun crew generally took turns in carrying the gun. The Lewis gun weighs about thirty-three pounds and, as it was generally carried on the shoulder, it often happened that a man's coat became frayed and worn at that particular spot from the friction. This helped the enemy to identify men belonging to the machine-gun section on more than one occasion. A story is told of a Volunteer belonging to the 8th Battalion known to his comrades as "German" Henebry. Being captured by Free State troops he was asked to what section he belonged. "To the Red Cross" said he. "I suppose", remarked an old ex-British soldier who was questioning him, "it was carrying the bandages that wore the hole in your coat".

About the beginning of October suggestions were made by many people of various political views that there should be a truce of some kind. The Free State Government, while repudiating any suggestion that agreement could be come to with the "Irregulars" short of a total surrender of all arms, issued a proclamation, nevertheless, promising an amnesty and free pardon to all who should deliver up all the arms and ammunition in their possession before October 15th and who would undertake to cease all armed activity against the Free State, and neither to aid nor abet such armed opposition for the future.

These suggestions for a truce came to nothing, but they called forth an interesting letter from the father of two well known officers of the 3rd Tipperary Brigade - one of whom was

to die at the hands of the Free State soldiery in less than a month from the date of the letter. This was Mr. Patrick Sadlier of Rathkenny, Fethard. The letter, which appeared in the "Clonmel Chronicle" of October 7th 1922, was as follows: -

"Rathkenny,
Fethard.

Oct. 3, '22.

Dear Sir,

Having read the letters of Father Carolan and Madame Maude Gonne MacBride, I am in entire agreement with their views. I know perfectly well that the soldiers on either side do not want to take the lives of their opponents, but of course the Republicans cannot honourably surrender their arms. That would spell defeat.

Why, then, not have the arms stored in armouries under guard of men elected by themselves?

One of my sons, Denis, gave up his life for his country, and the others are quite as ready to sacrifice theirs if need be; But God knows it is high time that we be once more united to work for the welfare of our poor, distracted country.

Yours faithfully,

Pat Sadlier".

It is interesting to note that the suggestion made in the above letter that the arms be stored in armouries is substantially the same as that made by the Archbishop of Cashel later on (March, 1923), namely, that arms be stored away by the Republicans until after a general election, when they should be delivered up to whatever government might be returned to power by the people; and this proposal was also adopted by Mr. de Valera in the conditions forwarded to the Free State Government on May 7th, 1923. To this proposal as well as to all others subsequently put forward, the Free State Government turned a deaf ear. It would have been better for the country and, perhaps, for the future stability of the Free State Government itself, if this proposal had been listened to.

Chapter 1V.

Civil War (3) - October to December, 1922:

The character of the war now changed in consequence of the setting-up by the Free State Government of Military Courts with power to inflict the death sentence on anyone convicted of taking part in or abetting any attack on the Free State forces, or even of having in his possession arms or explosives. Even before this, a bitterness hitherto unknown, had crept into the struggle on both sides. Soon after the death of Michael Collins a campaign of murder began which grew in intensity as time went on. On August 26th, three youths - two of them members of Fianna Éireann and the third a member of the I.R.A. - were foully murdered in Dublin. Exactly a week later another prominent member of the Irish Republican Army was dragged from his home in Dublin and murdered on the Naas road. On the same day two more Republicans were found shot dead in a field at Stillorgan, the body of one of them being completely naked.

{
R. Murphy
L. Murray

These murders, as well as others of a similar kind, were believed to have been the work of members of the Free State army Intelligence Department. Added to these crimes were the murders of unarmed prisoners carried out by the regular forces of the Free State - such as the shooting out of hand, after their surrender, of Brigadier Seamus Devins, T.D., and Divisional Adjutant Brian MacNeill. Now came the introduction of military courts and the death penalty for various offences, legislation which was to result in the execution of seventy-seven prisoners of war and to provoke drastic retaliation by the Irish Republican Army, including the shooting of members of the Free State Parliament who had voted for the execution of Republican prisoners of war.

The conflict raged unabatedly throughout Ireland during the month of October, and nowhere was the fighting more severe than in South Tipperary. On Thursday, October 12th, large bodies of Free State troops went through the Glen of Aherlow searching every nook and cranny for Republicans. One such party, while engaged in searching Glencushnabinnia, on the slopes of the mountain below Galteemore, were attacked by Republican troops and in a fight which lasted for half an hour one of the Free Staters was killed. Another detachment of Free State troops were engaged in searching the Rossadrehid district when, on entering a house, they were fired on by a Republican Volunteer. Though the Volunteer came under a raking fire he made good his escape from the house, wounding one of the Free State soldiers in the exchange of shots which followed.

Probably the most important development in the whole Civil War was the pronouncement of the Irish Catholic Hierarchy in a Pastoral Letter which was ordered to be read in all the churches of Ireland, on October 22nd. This Pastoral defined the Bishops' attitude to the war and charged the Republicans with deliberately setting out to make Ireland, as far as possible, a heap of ruins. We shall content ourselves here with giving a few extracts:

"They have wrecked Ireland from end to end", stated the Pastoral, "burning and destroying national property of enormous value, breaking roads, bridges and railways, seeking by an insensate blockade to starve the people, or bury them in social stagnation. They have caused more damage to Ireland in three months than could be laid to the charge of British rule in so many decades.

They carry on what they call a war, but which, in the absence of any legitimate authority to justify

it, is morally only a system of murder and assassination of the National forces.....

..... the guerilla warfare now being carried on by the Irregulars is without moral sanction; and therefore the killing of National soldiers in the course of it is murder before God; the seizing of public or private property is robbery; the breaking of roads, bridges and railways is criminal destruction; the invasion of homes and the molestation of citizens a grievous crime.

All those who, in contravention of this teaching, participate in such crimes are guilty of the gravest sins, and may not be absolved in confession, nor admitted to Holy Communion, if they purpose to persevere in such evil courses"

We have quoted but a few passages from the Bishops' Pastoral; but the passages quoted indicate sufficiently clearly the mind of the Irish Catholic Bishops on the Republican position in the Civil War. They went on to emphasise that their teaching was not due to political bias, that here there was question of no mere politics but of the moral and divine law. They also declared that the Republican leaders knew beyond the shadow of doubt that the methods they were using were un-Catholic and immoral. Finally, all priests were forbidden, under pain of suspension, ipso facto reserved to the Ordinary, to advocate or encourage the revolt, whether publicly or privately.

It may easily be imagined what consternation this document caused in the ranks of the Irish Republican Army, the vast majority of whose members were Catholics. As Dorothy Macardle remarks in her history of this period:

"To the rigours of the fight was added, for Catholics, of whom nearly the whole army was composed, the penalty of virtual excommunication: many a man was going into danger without absolution, knowing that if he fell in action or was captured and executed he might be refused the Last Sacrament".

Notwithstanding this the army fought on, believing in the justice of the Republican cause. In the eyes of Republicans this was no revolt. On the contrary, they believed that the Government of the Republic had been overthrown by a coup d'etat organised by a group of men who, without seeking any mandate from the people, had illegally usurped authority as a government and who, illegally, at the instance of a foreign government began a civil war. The Republican case was, to quote a proclamation issued by the Republican Government during the Civil War, that certain persons styling themselves the Provisional Government had "entered into a conspiracy with other enemies of the Republic to subvert the Republic which they were sworn to defend", and had "fomented a rebellion against the Republic". They held, moreover, that not only did the Irish people not sanction the Civil War, but that by voting for the Panel Candidates in the election of June, 1922, they had ratified, as far as in them lay, the Collins-de Valera Pact - a pact which had been solemnly adopted by Dáil Éireann and which, had it been kept, might have averted civil war, preserved unity, and left the whole question in dispute go before the people of Ireland in a free election on adult suffrage as provided for in the terms of the Pact.

There was, then, a conflict between two groups, each of which claimed to be the de jure Government of Ireland,

stigmatised its opponents as rebels and used all the military force at its disposal to assert what it deemed to be its rights and to suppress what it considered to be armed rebellion against its authority.

At this stage the Catholic Hierarchy in Ireland intervened with their declaration that the Provisional Government was the only lawful authority in the nation. This intervention and the strong denunciation of the war being carried on by the Republican forces as a system of murder and assassination drew an indignant protest from the Republican deputies assembled in the newly convened Republican Dáil, which had been re-established after the setting up of the Provisional Parliament of Southern Ireland by the Provisional Government. A resolution was passed as follows:

"That we ask the President to make representations to the Vatican formally and emphatically protesting as Head of the State against the unwarrantable action of the Irish Hierarchy in presuming and pretending to pronounce an authoritative judgment upon the question of constitutional and political fact now at issue in Ireland - viz., whether the so-called Provisional (Partition) Parliament, set up under threat of unjust war and by a coup d'etat, was the rightful Legislature and Government of the country or not, and in using the sanction of religion to enforce their own political views and compel acquiescence by Irish Republicans in an usurpation that entails no less consequences than the partition of the ancient territory of our nation, the loss of its sovereignty and declared independence, and the imposition of a test oath that amounts to the disfranchisement of Republicans who have regard for the sacred bond of an oath, and will not take it without meaning to keep it".

In the previous chapter we referred to a General Order issued to the Republican forces regarding the permanent destruction of enemy communications. Such destruction was regarded by Headquarters as almost indispensable for the successful operation of the Republican Army against the enemy, and O/Cs were informed that failure on their part to have the order carried out would be drastically dealt with. This order explains the almost universal destruction of railways and roads and the blowing up of bridges all over the area in which hostilities were being carried on. Such destruction undoubtedly disrupted the communications, not only of the enemy, but also of the common people of Ireland. In practice this was unavoidable. To disrupt the communications of the Free State forces thoroughly, and to make that disruption permanent could not be done without completely disorganising the economic life of the people of Ireland. This would, of course, be equally true were the British Government, instead of the Free State Government, the object of attack.

One of the primary aims of any army at war is the total destruction of enemy communications so as to throw him into hopeless confusion, completely disorganise his war effort and, in short, make it impossible for him to continue to carry on the war. This explains the concentrated bombing attacks carried out during the recent world war by all the belligerents on the railways, roads, marshalling yards, harbour installations and industrial centres of their enemies. This explains the "scorched earth" policy adopted by invaded countries. This explains also the repeated attacks on railway and road communications by the Republican forces during the Civil War in Ireland.

It is altogether a mistake to imagine for a moment that the purpose of the Republicans in these operations was "to

starve the people, or bury them in social stagnation". So far was it from being a campaign of destruction waged against the Irish people, that it had been envisaged as early as 1918 as an essential measure in case of a war against England, and only the coming of an armistice in 1921 prevented the campaign being pushed to its furthest limits. Thus, Seán Treacy, in a letter written on May 3, 1918, and quoted by Desmond Ryan in his biography of Treacy said:

"Smash stone bridges on to railway. Tear up rails at stations and throw empty trucks across lines - derail them. Smash signals. Cut telegraph and telephone wires as often as possible. Destroy Signal Cabins. Burn wooden bridges..... Barricade roads in as many places as feasible by felled trees, etc."

The same letter instructs the Volunteers to build stone walls across roads, burn the station house at Tipperary, tear up rails, cut wires, smash down bridge at Limerick Junction, or use gelignite if procurable. All this goes to show that the destruction of roads and railways in 1922 was not due to the frenzy of fanatics determined to wreak their vengeance on the Irish people, and led by leaders actuated by a deadly hatred of Ireland itself, as some would have us believe.

We give here the General Order issued on the instructions of the Deputy Chief of Staff and dated from Clonmel Military Barracks, July 20th, 1922:

"GENERAL ORDER

Reports are being received which show that when Roads, Railways, Bridges, etc., are destroyed, no provision is made to prevent them being restored or repaired by the enemy without the slightest opposition.

In future, when any vital and important point of communication is destroyed, you will arrange that it is watched by Scouts who will be in touch with armed parties, and inform them of the arrival of the enemy at these points. These armed parties will immediately engage him according to a plan already arranged.

Failure on the part of O/Cs to have this order carried out will be drastically dealt with, as the permanent destruction of enemy communications is almost indispensable for our successful operations against the enemy.

You will have this instruction issued at once to O/Cs all units".

This order, then, explains the recurring attacks on railways, the destruction of bridges, the burning down of stations, and signal cabins, the derailing of trains, the tearing up of the permanent way and the continuous interference with maintenance and repair parties which was a feature of army activities on the Republican side during the autumn and winter of 1922 and the spring of 1923. So serious did the position become that the Free State army authorities were obliged to take special measures to deal with these activities. Armoured trains were set to patrol the railways in the more disturbed areas, and repair gangs were always accompanied by military patrols and worked under armed protection. But even these precautions did not always avail.

The first armoured train to appear in the South Tipperary area operated on the Thurles-Clonmel line and was not long engaged in patrol work before it became evident that armoured trains were not going to stop the 3rd Tipperary Brigade from carrying out the orders they had received regarding the permanent destruction of enemy communications.

On October 4th, an armoured train left Thurles carrying a repair party and escort for the purpose of repairing the damaged railway line and bridges between Thurles and Clonmel. Colonel Russel was in charge. Repair work was started between Laffansbridge and Farnaleen but before many minutes had elapsed the party was under fire. The Free State troops replied to the fire and, making a sortie, captured two of the attackers who were later brought to Fethard barracks. Meanwhile, the line having been repaired, the armoured train proceeded towards Fethard to repair a bridge close to Fethard station. Hardly had the repair party descended from the train, however, when they were again fired on. A small party of Free State soldiers who were sent to make a sortie under a lieutenant failed to return and the armoured train had to leave without them. The train returned to work on the following day and again on the second next day. On each occasion the repair party was attacked by the I.R.A. The lieutenant and seven men who had disappeared while on a sortie were not heard of for another week, when they turned up in Fethard. What they had been doing in the meantime, or where they had been, was not disclosed.

In the early hours of Sunday morning, October 15th, the same armoured train while patrolling the line between Laffansbridge and Farnaleen was attacked by a strong party of the I.R.A. at Clonbrogan. The attack is said to have lasted several hours, bombs and mines being used as well as rifles and machine-guns. Some of the rails were removed by the I.R.A. before the armoured train arrived and fire was opened from both sides of the railway line. Five of the Free State forces were wounded in the engagement which followed and the whole party eventually surrendered. The Free State claim that the soldiers did not surrender until their last shot was

fired. The Republicans dismantled the engine, deprived their prisoners of their arms and equipment, released them, and retired. The damaged armoured train was afterwards towed into Clonmel.

An armoured train could not be expected to be in two places at one and the same time. Hence not only were repair parties fired on even when protected by an armoured car, but destruction on a large scale was possible on other parts of the railway line while the armoured train was elsewhere engaged. If the Thurles-Clonmel line suffered much at the hands of the I.R.A. the Limerick-Waterford line which passes through Clonmel suffered no less. Again and again it was announced that railway communication had been restored between these towns, but scarcely had the rails been repaired on one section of the line when they were torn up elsewhere, and the repair of one bridge was speedily followed by the destruction of another.

So serious did the situation become in South Tipperary that many of the towns were virtually cut off from the outside world. Clonmel itself was like a beleaguered town and food supplies at one time ran dangerously low. At length, as the activities of the Republican forces made railway travel and the transport of goods either by road or rail practically impossible, a Transport Company was set up by local traders under the management of the Mayor, Mr. Frank Drohan, with the object of relieving the "very acute position of stocks of food supplies" by providing for the transport of goods by water from Waterford to Clonmel. The new company - known as "The Suir Transport, Trading and Finance Company" - made a gallant effort to meet the situation, but only with partial success. One of the effects of the new venture was the transfer to the river Suir of some of the attention hitherto given to the railway by the Republicans.

Two cargo boats leaving Carrick for Clonmel were held up by large trees which had been thrown into the river above the former town, thus effectively blocking the route. The boats proceeded after a long delay, only to be halted by an I.R.A. flying column between Kilsheelan and Newtown Anner. The boats were ordered to the bank of the river, where the raiders selected what goods they needed and allowed the boats to proceed with the remainder to Clonmel. This affair took place near Killaloe church, but the goods were landed, not on the Tipperary side, but on the Waterford side of the river.

Some idea of the state of communication between South Tipperary and the outer world and even between the various towns and districts of South Tipperary itself may be gauged from the fact that one bridge alone on the Thurles-Clonmel line had to be repaired no less than sixteen times. Moreover, up to the end of January, 1923, the number of bridges destroyed in South Tipperary, including eleven of the thirteen crossings of the Suir, was two hundred, many of which were beyond repair. Eventually, in the spring of 1923 the Free State army Maintenance Corps under the command of Major-General Russell succeeded in getting the upper hand of the Irish Republican Army. A line of blockhouses was established along the railway at all important signal cabins, bridges and stations. This, coupled with the growing disintegration of the war-wearied Republican forces finally won the battle of the railways for the Irish Free State.

On October 26th, the 3rd Tipperary Brigade suffered a heavy loss in the death of its Vice-Brigadier, Commandant Paddy Dalton, who was killed in action at Donohill. "Big Paddy" was personally popular, not only with the men under his command, but with people of all shades of political opinion in the community, and there was sincere and widespread sorrow when the news of his death was announced.

He was staying with some of his men in the Donohill district and happened to be in Dwyer's publichouse in the village when a ration party of about fifteen Free State soldiers arrived there, travelling in two motor lorries. On arriving in the village the officer commanding the Free State troops ordered his men to leave the lorries and advance in extended order, right and left.

When Commandant Dalton and his companions saw the soldiers dismount and extend with the object of surrounding the house they rushed out through the front door, firing as they advanced. Commandant Dalton took shelter in the cowshed from which he discharged a number of shots at the enemy. He then retreated, firing as he went, and crossed over a "ditch" to the haggard. When crossing into the field behind the haggard he was shot dead, the bullet passing through both lungs and wounding the large arteries. Thus died one of Tipperary's bravest sons, falling as he himself would have wished to fall, in defence of the Republic. At his funeral, which took place to St. Michael's Cemetery, Tipperary, on Sunday afternoon, October 29th, there was a large attendance of his friends and comrades, not only from Tipperary district but from Clonmel, Cahir and Cashel as well, numbering in all about four thousand people. After the burial service had been concluded, the Last Post was sounded and three volleys discharged over the grave by a firing party of six Volunteers.

Following close on the death of Commandant Dalton came the sad news of the death of another fighting officer of the 3rd Tipperary Brigade, Commandant Michael Sadlier, Officer Commanding the 2nd Battalion at the time of his death. The circumstances of Commandant Mick Sadlier's death were as follows:

Shortly after midnight on Thursday/Friday, November 2nd/3rd, 1922, a party of Free State soldiers left Cashel and began a house to house search in the course of which they arrived at the house of William Heffernan of Marlhill which they surrounded. Commandant Sadlier was sleeping there with a fellow officer, Paddy Loughlin, when they were aroused by a hammering at the door.

The housekeeper delayed opening the door in order to give the two men time to get away; but on going downstairs they discovered that the house was surrounded and escape was impossible. If they fought they would have no chance as it would be two men against fifty. They therefore took refuge in a hiding place under the stairs, but before doing so, gave their guns to the housekeeper to hide, according to the latter's testimony at the inquest. It may be remarked here that at this time it made a great difference to a man whether he was captured with or without arms. In the latter case he was safe enough, but in the former case he was liable to the death penalty. This would explain why the two officers should have given the weapons to the housekeeper to hide.

If this account be correct the two men were unarmed when their hiding place was discovered. On being discovered they were ordered out and the officer in command of the raiders called on them to come forward with their hands up. One of the soldiers was holding a lighted candle and when the two men were called upon to come forward this candle was suddenly extinguished. It is not clear from the account given at the inquest whether this was an accident or was done deliberately.

Immediately after the the candle had been extinguished shots rang out. According to the Free State version Sadlier rushed at the Free State commander and, grappling with

him, tried to shoot him, but was shot himself by the commander. Sadlier's companion then surrendered. According to the housekeeper's story the two Republican officers had no guns at the time and could not have fired at the others. It is a fact that the Free State captain was wounded in the hand, but one of the military witnesses stated later at the inquest that the captain's wound was caused by a ricochet from the soldier's own rifle. It was also alleged by one of the Free State party that Commandant Sadlier called for mercy.

Commandant Sadlier was removed to Cashel hospital in a dying condition and died there on the following night. He made a dying statement to his father in which he declared that he was unarmed when shot. Stretching out his hand to his father he said: "Goodbye, father." To his father he also said: "I had no gun; I fired no shot. They shot me the same as they would shoot a dog. They showed me no mercy". He added that he had given his gun to the girl. To another visitor, Mr. Patrick English, U.C., Cashel, he said: "I feel very bad. I think I am dying.... They shot me like a dog and they claimed a victory to Pat Loughlin that they had done for Sadlier. My leaders, I will follow them to death. I think they are right, and the moment I doubt my leaders I will lay down my arms. They shot me like a dog, but I forgive them". To his father Commandant Sadlier also added that he forgave everybody.

Commandant Sadlier's father made a remark which many people on both sides heartily endorsed: "My son is gone, but the only regret I have is that it is a sad time when Irishmen should turn their guns on each other. I hope this time will end soon".

Commandant Mick Sadlier's remains were laid to rest beside those of his brother in Drangan. All business was suspended in Fethard, and blinds were drawn as the funeral procession passed through the streets of the town. The funeral was of large dimensions, one hundred and thirty eight cars and sixteen motors testifying to the respect in which the deceased soldier was held by the people of his native district. A unique tribute from the enemy was shown in the flying of the tricolour at half mast over the Garda barracks in Fethard on the day of the funeral.

On the very day that Commandant Mick Sadlier was killed his brother Tom, who had taken command of Flying Column No. 2 in succession to Commandant Paddy Dalton, was in action with his column at Knockalisheen near Ballymacarbery in the Nire Valley. The column was billeted in houses along the hill when scouts arrived with news that a fairly large column of Free Staters had arrived in Ballymacarbery from Rathgormack.

It is possible that the Free State force had received information that the Republican column was in the neighbourhood for, when they had rested for a time in Ballymacarbery, they got into their lorries and turned up the Nire road towards the village of Knockalisheen. Meantime, the Column Commander had decided to bring down the column to Ballymacarbery there to engage the enemy. The men were just on the point of leaving when word came that the Free Staters were on the way up.

When Commandant Sadlier heard that the Free State force was on the way up he set about picking out the best position he could for the fight. Even the best position was a bad one. Owing to the nature of the ground there was no naturally strong position there. The gradient from the Nire level is very

steep up to Knockalisheen. As the Free State troops came up fire was opened by Nugent's machine-gun section and soon the place was a bedlam as machine-guns and rifles spattered and cracked furiously at each other along the hill.

On one side of the Republican position was a sunken breen in which the Engineers were placed. After a short interval the Engineers received orders to retire to the main position further up the hill. This was a bad move, as when the men left the breen the way was clear for the enemy to creep up the breen under cover and turn the Republican flank. A shortage of ammunition was also a source of worry to the Republican troops who now received orders to conserve their ammunition and fire as little as possible. The order was finally given to retreat from the main position, and while carrying out this order Volunteer Jim Dahille was seriously wounded by enemy machine-gun fire. As it was impossible for the column to carry their wounded with them, the men were forced, much to their regret, to abandon their wounded comrade who thus fell into the hands of the enemy. One of the Free State soldiers was also wounded in the course of the fight. The column retired over the hills to Harney's cross whence they moved down to Derrinlaur where the men were billeted for the night.

On the day following the fight at Knockalisheen two columns of Free State troops set out for the Blackcastle district to make a search of the area which was known to be a favourite haunt of the Republicans who had their Brigade Headquarters in the area. One of the Free State columns set out from Fethard, the other from Clonmel. Working in close co-operation they advanced through the Blackcastle and Graigue districts, searching the houses and "combing" the countryside as they went. Eight I.R.A. men were captured by the Free

State troops during this operation. They were all together in a tent, and with them was captured a quantity of arms and ammunition including four rifles, three revolvers, one Thompson gun, a number of bombs and an assortment of ammunition of various kinds. The captured men were Gus McCarthy of Fethard, Andy Moloney, James Flannery, Patrick Ahearn, Patrick Maher, Thomas Griffin (Clonmel), Gerald O'Connor, Tralee, and James Devlin.

On November 6th, 1922, Clogheen Workhouse, which had been occupied temporarily by Free State troops, and then handed over to the Borstal Institution as an alternative to the Clonmel buildings which were needed for military purposes, was burned to the ground by units of the I.R.A. The Governor, Major Dobbyn, was ordered to have all the boys and officials removed from the building within twenty minutes, as it was to be destroyed. The removal accomplished, the workhouse was set on fire and the Governor and boys of the Borstal Institution went to Cahir, there to make whatever arrangements they could about their future habitation.

Chapter V.

Civil War (4) - November and December, 1922:

A new phase of the war opened when, on November 17th, 1922, four Republican prisoners of war were executed in Dublin on the charge of possessing revolvers. This was the first batch of executions and was but the prelude to the execution of more important men. On November 24th, Erskine Childers, against whom a deluge of the most vile and slanderous propoganda had been let loose by the Free State authorities, was shot by a firing squad while his appeal was still pending - a proceeding which shocked public as well as legal opinion and caused this execution to be regarded as nothing less than a judicial murder. Gavan Duffy publicly charged the Government with trying Childers for one thing and executing him for another - "something contrary to natural justice as understood in every part of the world".

The courts which tried the prisoners were secret courts and executions generally followed within a few hours of the sentence. The Irish Republican Army authorities now determined to take drastic measures on their part to see that this shooting of prisoners of war should stop. Immediately following on the execution of Erskine Childers the Republican "War News" issued a list of members of the Provisional Parliament who had voted for the execution of Republican prisoners. Prefixed to the list was the statement: -

"In view of the secret slaughter on Friday last week of four young Republican soldiers and yesterday of Staff-Captain Childers, I.R.A., after their so-called 'trials' by the secret Murder Courts set up by Richard Mulcahy with the approval of the Kildare Street Partition Parliament, we now remind the public of the names of the men who voted in favour of 'President' Cosgrave's motion approving the principle of the setting up of these 'Courts'....."

On the 27th November a letter was sent by the Chief of Staff, acting on behalf of the Army Council, to the "Speaker of the Provisional Parliament of Southern Ireland" in which the Free State authorities were accused of barbarous treatment of Republican prisoners of war and even of having tortured, wounded and murdered them. It was further alleged that many of the senior officers on the Free State side had been guilty of most brutal crimes towards I.R.A. prisoners; that these officers included members of the Provisional Parliament, and that in some areas they had reduced their soldiers to a state of savagery. Finally, the letter declared those who voted for the execution of prisoners equally guilty with the members of the Provisional Government of the deaths of those prisoners which were stigmatised as legal murder, and warning was given to the Speaker and every member of the Parliament that unless the Free State army recognised the rules of warfare in the future the Republican Army authorities would adopt "very drastic measures" to protect their forces.

Three days later an Instruction was sent to all Battalion O/Cs by the Chief of Staff ordering that all members of the Provisional Parliament who were present and voted for the "Murder Bill" should be shot at sight. It also instructed the O/Cs to shoot at sight all Free State army officers who approved the bill and were aggressive and active against the Republican forces, as well as all ex-British army officers and men who joined the Free State army since December 6th, 1921. A list of members of the Provisional Parliament who were to be shot at sight was appended. It was also ordered that six residences should be destroyed for every Volunteer executed. A further addition to the Instruction listed fourteen categories of people who were to be shot at sight.

These instructions have been termed "Orders of Frightfulness" by some writers; so they were. The Free State authorities had embarked quite deliberately on a policy of terrorism. The Republican authorities replied by a similar policy on their side. On December 7th Brigadier Seán Hales who had taken a prominent part in the War of Independence and who, as a member of the Provisional Parliament had voted for the execution of prisoners, was shot dead in the streets of Dublin, presumably in furtherance of the reprisal policy announced by the Chief of Staff. His brother, Tom Hales, held high rank in the Irish Republican Army at this very time. Reprisals beget reprisals.

On the morning following the shooting of Seán Hales, four of the senior army officers who had been held prisoners since the fall of the Four Courts were taken from their cells and shot in cold blood without trial of any kind, as a reprisal for the shooting of Seán Hales. The Free State Government announced that this reprisal was intended as a "solemn warning" to the dead men's associates; while Mr. Cosgrave declared that they would strike terror into the Republicans. It seemed as if the war was about to deteriorate into a murderous vendetta on both sides.

Meanwhile the war went on and death added daily to its toll of victims. In Tipperary as in other parts of Ireland the tide of success was with the Free State forces. They had the men, the money, the war material, the support of the bulk of the population and, finally, all the resources of the British Empire at their back. Daily the Irish Republican Army was dwindling away; men were being killed or captured and there was no one to replace them.

In South Tipperary Brigadier Dinny Lacy had made heroic efforts to reorganise the various battalions, but in spite of his efforts, owing to the fact that the Free State army was slowly but surely gaining the upper hand, and that even to the ordinary Volunteer the ultimate defeat of the Republicans now seemed inevitable, the reorganisation was not very successful. Towards the end of November large columns of Free State troops operating from Clonmel, Carrick, Cashel, Fethard and Callan scoured the country round Sliabh na mBan and made many prisoners. During the course of these operations Jim Hayes of the 7th Battalion, a brother of Commandant Seán Hayes, was shot dead in a running fight between a small body of Republican troops and a large Free State column proceeding from Moyglass to Cashel.

On November 21st Clogheen was again invaded by the I.R.A. who, having on a previous occasion burned down the Workhouse, now destroyed the Courthouse and police barracks. A few days later the No. 2 Flying Column blew up the railway bridge at Carrickcreegan, between Clonmel and Cahir, for the second time in the course of a week. Only a week before the bridge had been destroyed and a goods train derailed; the bridge had been repaired again, however, and had only been restored for traffic on the previous day. On this second occasion a passenger train proceeding from Cahir to Clonmel was held up and the passengers compelled to descend. The train was then derailed. Two Free State soldiers who were travelling on the train were taken prisoners and having been brought some distance away were stripped of their uniforms and then released unharmed.

December opened with a fierce fight between a Republican column and a Free State column in the Carrick area. The Free State troops, who came out from Carrick, were engaged in combing the mountainous districts on the eastern and south-

eastern slopes of Sliabh na mBan when they were attacked by an I.R.A. column in the Glenbower-Kilcash area. This clash occurred on Sunday, December 3rd, 1922.

The Free State force, which was a rather large one, was divided into several columns or sections, each of which took a different area of operations. Shortly after noon a column of these troops was proceeding along the road in extended formation when it came under heavy fire from Republican riflemen supported by machine-guns. The Republican forces held positions in the hills and the Free State troops were soon forced to take cover under the low fence by the roadside. They replied to the attackers' fire with rifles and machine-guns and an intense battle raged for more than three hours.

Two of the Republican troops were killed in the fighting and four others were claimed wounded by the Free Staters. On the Free State side three soldiers were wounded. The two Republicans killed in the battle were P. (E?) Butler of Grangemockler, 'C' Company, 8th Battalion, and Patrick Bennett of Ballingarry, 'B' Company, 7th Battalion. The fighting continued with unabated intensity until dusk when the I.R.A. column retreated across the hilly country, having first set fire to a whole "ditch" of furze which lay between them and the Free State troops. This afforded the Republicans an effective smoke-screen under cover of which, aided by the gathering darkness, they retired without further losses.

Early in December the various columns and A.S.U. in South Tipperary began to move towards the eastern boundary of the brigade area for the purpose of carrying out one of the most daring and sensational coups brought off by the Republican forces during the war. This was the attack on and the capture

of the military post at Carrick. The various units taking part in this attack were under the command of Comdt.-General Tom Barry, O/C of Operations on G.H.Q. Staff. Brigadier Lacy participated in the attack and every precaution was taken to ensure success. The following account is based on the personal narrative of one of the officers of the 5th Battalion A.S.U. then on active service with No. 2 Column.

The Column was mobilised at Ballyneety near Ardfinnan and proceeded through Goatenbridge to Castlegrace, being joined by the Brigadier on the way. From Castlegrace the column marched to Burncourt through the Pole-Carew demesne. At Burncourt sentries were posted and scouts sent out to see that there was no danger of a surprise attack while the men rested for the day. A large movement of Free State troops had been reported from Clonmel. These troops, under General Prout, were said to be attempting the round-up of the Republican columns operating in the south-western districts of the barony of Iffa and Offa, between the Galtees, the Knockmealdowns and the Comeraghs, and were actually following No. 2 Column along the valley of the Tar, though they were a day or two behind-hand

The column left Burncourt in the evening and marched to Skeheenarinka and thence to the Lodge of Galtee Castle where a halt was made for the night. Local Volunteers took turns with the column men on sentry duty during the night, and early next morning the column fell in at a house a little distance up the hill. There was a blood-red sunrise and a strange hush everywhere in the morning air. The column marched up the mountain along a Board of Works road, sometimes making short cuts through the heather. Crossing one side of Galteemore the men came down to Glencushnabinnia into the Glen of Aherlow. During the march the weather had changed. A

wet mist crept along the mountain side and the men marched in a grey fog. The rain came down, and as the column marched on the rail fell heavier.

The column had been led to expect opposition in the Glen as it was rumoured that the Glen people were pro-Free State. For this reason two men wearing Free State uniform (taken from the soldiers at Carrickcreegan) namely, Mick McGrath and Nacky Neill, were now placed in the advance guard - the column always travelled with an advance guard and a rear guard connected with the main body. The idea was that the Glen people seeing the Free State uniforms would take the column for a Free State column and give the men a hearty welcome. This was based on what proved to be a false assumption, viz., that the Glen people were Free State in sympathy.

The uniforms did deceive the people and the result was nearly disastrous. It so happened that Commandant Martin Breen's Column was billeted in Glencushnabinna when the No. 2 Column came down the mountain side. Some of the inhabitants seeing the green uniforms gave the alarm. As the column neared the first houses several men rushed out half dressed and disappeared in the fog. The column met with a very hostile reception from the people. One of the men relates an incident which shows the great spirit of the Glen people. The Column Commander, Commandant Tom Sadlier, threatened to shoot one young man who was driving a horse from the creamery, because he refused to show the column billets. He looked down the barrel of Sadlier's gun without blinking an eye and told him to shoot and be damned!

In spite of these misunderstandings the men did get billeted eventually. When the men were at last settled in

their billets the misunderstanding was cleared up. Breen's column returned with the intention of attacking the "Free Staters" but found to their surprise that they were dealing with their own comrades of the 5th and 6th Battalions - the men south of the Galtees. The latter now learned from their comrades of the 4th Battalion that it was only the fog and rain which prevented the latter opening fire on them as they descended from the mountain into the level plain of the Glen of Aherlow.

Both columns now joined forces and, led by the Brigadier, continued their march. That night they billeted at Ardane and the next night crossed the Suir in farm carts over a ford near Knockgraffon. They rested in the neighbourhood of Whitelands and the following day resumed the march till they reached Rathsallagh near Rosegreen. If the reader consults the map he will see that by this time they had reached a point far in the rear of General Prout's forces who were still seeking them in the area between the Galtees and the Knockmealdowns.

From Rathsallagh the columns moved through Tullamaine and Farnaleen beyond which another halt was made and the troops billeted for the night. The next evening they moved to Rathkenny near Drangan where some of them were invited to partake of the hospitality of the Column Commander's father, Mr. Pat Sadlier. Early on the following morning the enemy, who were raiding the district, came into collision with units of the 7th Battalion under Harry Bushe and a brisk action developed under the eyes of the columns. The men were, however, instructed to take no part in the fight as it was important that their presence in the neighbourhood should go undetected by the Free State troops. Consequently Bushe was left to carry on the fight on his own resources, which he did

quite successfully. When this action was over the columns moved off again in the direction of Sliabh na mBan and proceeding to the Grangemockler district they billeted there that night. In the interval they had been joined by Comdt.-General Tom Barry and his escort. Barry was O/C Operations and the attack on Carrick-on-Suir was to be under his personal command.

On the night of Saturday, December 9th, 1922, the people of Clonmel were startled by the frenzied blowing of bugles in the streets of the town, calling the troops to arms, and by the rushing of excited soldiers from the various billets in which they were scattered throughout the town to the military barracks, there to report for duty. The noise of heavy military lorries, Crossley tenders and armoured cars soon resounded through the streets as large bodies of troops in full war equipment left the town in the direction of Carrick-on-Suir. Gradually the news spread through the town; news which caused not only amazement, but even consternation, amongst the majority of the citizens: Carrick-on-Suir had been attacked and captured by Lacy and his men; the garrison, forced to surrender, had been disarmed, and the Workhouse, used as a military barracks by the Free Staters, had been burned to the ground. It seemed so utterly incredible that no one would believe it at first; but it proved to be only too true, and the newspapers on Monday bore eloquent testimony to the success of the attack and the sensation it produced by their headlines:

"IRREGULAR COUP AT CARRICK. GARRISON SURPRISED
AND ARRESTED. WORKHOUSE BUILDING BURNED DOWN.
BIG SEIZURES OF ARMS, AMMUNITION AND CLOTHING".

The attack on Carrick military post took place at about 9.30 p.m. on Saturday, December 9th. The I.R.A. columns,

which were now augmented by Volunteers from the 7th and 8th Battalions, paraded at Aughavaneen at 2.30 p.m. preparatory to receiving instructions from the O/C Operations. One of those present recalls it as a hard bleak day and mentions the biting wind which was blowing across the field in which the columns paraded for orders. Amongst the group of brigade officers who gathered with Barry some distance from the men were Dinny Lacy, Bill Quirke - who had become Vice-Brigadier in succession to Commandant Dalton - Michael Sheehan and "Sparky" Breen.

Commandant-General Barry, addressing the assembled men, informed them that they were about to attack Carrick military post and explained in detail the manner in which the operation was to be carried out. He informed them that there were 120 officers and men in the barracks in Carrick with several machine-gun sections amongst them. As they kept heavy armed patrols on the streets at night, these patrols would also have to be dealt with. "It seemed", said one of the men afterwards, 'as if we had our work cut out for us".

The men were to be divided into four sections. The first two sections were to rush the barracks; the third was to attack the military patrols in the town and round up any stray soldiers that might be found outside the barracks, while the fourth was to barricade the road between Clonmel and Carrick and hold it while the fighting was in progress in the town. This section would have to prevent any help coming from the Clonmel garrison and had to be prepared to oppose any attempt at relieving the Carrick garrison by armed force.

Barry himself selected the first section as follows: - Barry himself to lead the attack, Dinny Lacy, "Sparky" Breen, Buddy O'Donoghue, Tom Lane and "Flyer" Nyhan - the last two

being Corkmen who had come as Barry's escort. A braver or more determined group of men than the men thus selected could hardly have been found to lead the attack.

The second section was to rush into the main barracks while the first section was disarming the sentry and rushing the guard-room. This second section was to be led by Bill Quirke who was to have the privilege of picking his own men. The third section, that which was to carry out the attack on the military patrols in the town, was to be led by Commandant Mick Sheehan. He, also, was allowed to pick his men. Those who had not been selected by either Quirke or Sheehan were to form the third section which was to barricade the road between Carrick and Clonmel, and was to be led by Ned Glendon. As the plan of attack was unfolded there was a grin of delight on every face and strange to say, nobody there present seemed to have any doubt as to the result.

"I couldn't help thinking to myself what a fine, gallant crowd they were", said one of those who had been present, speaking years afterwards. "There was not a sign of fear amongst them. Every face was burned by wind and weather. What if the cheek bones are a bit prominent through hardship and hunger - that did not matter with Irish soldiers. They were fighting against overwhelming odds and were giving a very good account of themselves; in fact, if the rest of the country did only half as well the war might have had a very different ending".

It was after dark when the columns eventually moved out of Grangemockler village, past South Lodge, and down through Glenflower. Down the glen marched the columns until they reached the old R.I.C. barracks at the end of the pass where the road forked. Here the section under Ned Glendon took the road

to the right towards Clonmel while the others proceeded left towards Carrick. The main column now marched on till the next crossroads was reached when the men left the main road and proceeded along a by-road in the direction of Ballyneal. At this time the column was actually travelling away from Carrick, the reason being that as the military barracks was situated at the Clonmel side, on the main road, a little outside the town, to have gone directly to Carrick from Glenbower would have meant passing through part of the town before reaching the barracks. Soon the column was on the main Clonmel-Carrick road and heading for the military barracks. The sections which were to rush the barracks had got orders to remove their boots so as to deaden the sound of their approach. As it was a cold winter's night this latter part of the journey was none too comfortable for those who were thus situated. The barracks being thus approached and the men placed in position without being observed by the enemy, Barry and Lacy advanced towards the sentry at the main gate. The sentry, following the usual procedure, halted the men and ordered them to come forward for recognition. They came forward - and were not recognised; but they gave the sentry no time to do anything about it. Moving like lightning, Barry overpowered and disarmed the sentry who was hardly on the ground before Lacy and the others were into the guard room. Meanwhile Quirke's section had rushed the main building and soon the barracks was in the hands of the Republicans.

While the events related above were taking place at the barracks Sheehan had led his section into the town where the military patrols were halted and captured after some brisk firing, while soldiers who were off duty and had been spending their evening imbibing in the publichouses or attending the

cinema, were rounded up and marched to the Workhouse barracks which was by this time in flames. All telegraphic and telephonic communication between Carrick and the outside world had been interrupted by the cutting of the wires and the dismantling of the apparatus.

The taking of Carrick barracks and the capture and disarming of the military garrison was carried out with a minimum of casualties. Among the Republican troops there were no casualties whatsoever. The Free State forces suffered the loss of one killed and three wounded, while a girl who happened to be in the street in Carrickbeg when the firing began was seriously wounded in the face. In most cases the Free State soldiers were disarmed without a shot being fired. In some cases those in the town resisted, and it was then that the firing broke out. When Sergeant Gardiner met the Republican troops he drew his revolver and attempted to fire but fell with a bullet through his head before he could do so.

Some lorries were commandeered from Messrs. Dowley's and Power's stores and driven to the barracks where they were loaded with captured material including rifles, Lewis guns, revolvers, ammunition and uniforms. There were about seventy rifles taken and two Lewis guns. A Crossley tender belonging to the military garrison was also taken and helped to carry away some of the captured material. During all this time armed sentries were posted at every street corner in Carrick and challenged all passers-by. Shortly before midnight all the captured troops were assembled and numbered off by the victorious Republicans who, having released them all except Captain Halfe, the O/C of the Carrick garrison, left the town taking their prisoner with them.

The Republican forces left the town on foot as the lorries were needed to carry the captured goods and could not

find room for the men. The columns left by the Clonmel road so as to confuse the enemy as to the direction they had taken and their probable destination, turning off into the by-roads when they had reached the railway bridge some distance outside the town and eventually retiring to the Ballingarry area. Stopping on the way for a short rest at Ballyneal and passing silently through Grangemockler in the small hours of the morning the columns at last reached Nine-Mile-House where they halted and rested for a little while. Here the men went back to their own columns once more and Nos. 1 and 2 Columns were reformed under their Commanders "Sparky" Breen and Tom Sadlier preparatory to marching away. The men were glad to get back to their old columns and the companionship of old friends after the hours they had spent separated from one another since they had left Grangemockler the evening before. Their feelings are thus expressed by one of the men from Sadlier's column:

"Presently Tom Sadlier arrived, some of our column with him. All our fellows began to move across towards him. He had a short talk with some of the fellows and the next thing we heard was: 'Fall in! Fall in, lads, Fall in.'" From every side our lads came pushing through the crowd. Soon we were in two lines, Nugent and Aylward with their guns in their old places; it seemed like home once more. All the lads were just as glad as myself. Everyone was all smiles. On the other side of the road, but a little farther down, 'Sparky' Breen's crowd were falling in also. They were evidently coming with us".

After the Republican columns had withdrawn from Carrick, Free State dispatch riders were sent post haste to

Clonmel and Waterford and to Kilkenny to announce tidings of the disaster which had befallen the Carrick garrison and to seek aid from those towns. Large reinforcements arrived from Clonmel that night, and next day more troops continued to pour in. A general tightening up of regulations followed on this raid, not only in Carrick but even in Clonmel. Curfew regulations were more strictly enforced. The authorities were apparently apprehensive lest the tactics which proved so effective in Carrick might be tried also in towns like Clonmel. On December 13th a notice appeared in the local papers signed by Col.-Commandant M.J. Heaslip, O/C of the Clonmel garrison, requiring all civilians to be indoors between the hours of 11 p.m. and 6 a.m., while in Carrick an order was issued the day following the capture of the post, requiring all civilians to be indoors by 9 p.m. To conclude; the lorries commandeered by the Republicans to remove the captured stores were returned to their owners the following day with the exception of the Crossley tender which, being part of the spoils of war taken from the enemy, was retained. It was also needed in the carrying out of the next operation which at this time had already been planned. This was the taking of Callan, Thomastown and Mullinavat, of which more anon. Captain Balfe of the Carrick garrison was kept prisoner for some days and then released unharmed, returning to Carrick none the worse for his experience.

On Tuesday, December 12th, large forces of Free State troops accompanied by armoured cars scoured the Fethard-Killenaule-Ballingarry districts, knowing that the Republicans who had taken Carrick should be somewhere in the vicinity. Operating in the Mardyke district they came in contact with the I.R.A. columns and a hot engagement ensued which resulted in the capture of four Volunteers. At about half past three

the same afternoon either the same or another body of troops operating in the Ballingarry area came into conflict with the main Republican columns at a place called the Coalfields. Dinny Lacy and his men were there together with Commandant Tom Sadlier's column, while Commandant Martin Breen's column held a position about a mile away. The engagement lasted over an hour, rifles and machine-guns being used on both sides. During the fight another column of Free State troops appeared from the Callan direction. During the course of the engagement, which was a particularly severe one, in which units of the 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th Battalions were engaged, Seán O'Riordan of the 4th Battalion, a member of Martin Breen's column, was shot dead and seven more prisoners were taken in addition to the four who had been taken earlier in the day, thus making a total of eleven prisoners, some of whom, being captured with arms, were liable to the death sentence and, indeed, were sentenced to death, though the sentence was never carried out.

This fight at Ballingarry, with the losses inflicted on the Republican forces in consequence, coming so soon after the triumph they had achieved in Carrick, served to remind the men of the ups and downs of war; and though they mourned the loss of a brave comrade and regretted the capture of others, they were in no wise disheartened but steeled themselves for the battle still ahead and prepared for the next move which was to enhance still more the prestige of the Brigade and carry its fame into the neighbouring county of Kilkenny.

In speaking of the next event of importance in the history of the Brigade, namely, the taking of Callan, Thomastown and Mullinavat, it is well to remind the reader that these were not attacks in the strict sense of the word. Though the reports which appeared in the press at the time

would suggest that the taking of these posts was accompanied by fighting in which Thompson and Lewis guns were used, the fact is that the military posts of Callan, Thomastown and Mullinavat in Co. Kilkenny surrendered without a shot being fired on either side. The garrisons in these posts surrendered as a result of a previous arrangement entered into by the Commanding Officers with the Republican leaders.

The officers concerned had, like many other Free State officers, become disillusioned; they felt that they had been inveigled into the Free State army under false pretences, and realising now that by continuing to fight on the Free State side they were opposing all the national traditions and were, in reality, fighting to suppress all that the men of 1916 had stood for, they had decided to forsake the Free State and come back to their old allegiance by rejoining the ranks of the I.R.A. In so doing, they knew they were signing their own death warrant should they ever fall into the hands of the Free State authorities during the course of the war. Already men were being executed for deserting to the Republicans, and more such executions were to follow.

The Republican columns which entered Callan, Thomastown and Mullinavat under Brigadier Lacy, were the same ones which had swooped down on Carrick the preceding week-end. This time, however, Comdt. -General Barry and his escort were not present, having left for an Executive meeting. On Thursday, December 14th, the Republicans, wearing uniforms captured in the attack on Carrick, entered the town of Callan and proceeding to the barracks disarmed the garrison. The Free State O/C, Captain Ned Somers, joined up with the Republican forces. They then left in Crossley tenders and motor cars for Thomastown which they reached about two o'clock in the morning. Here two houses were occupied by the Free

State troops stationed in the village. Surprising and overpowering the garrison, which was disarmed, the Republicans proceeded to the Courthouse which was occupied by the Garda Siochana and, ordering the men out, set the Courthouse on fire. Then then entered the post office where the telegraphic apparatus was dismantled. Leaving Thomastown about 4 a.m. the columns proceeded to Mullinavat where the garrison was similarly overpowered and disarmed. To facilitate the coup by the flying columns, the Kilkenny local units had made sure that the roads were trenched and barricaded, telegraph and telephone wires cut, and the railway line between Thomastown and Kilkenny torn up.

These successful swoops by which three towns with their garrisons fell to the Republican forces and large quantities of arms and ammunition were seized, were a source of the greatest chagrin to the enemy commanders, coming so soon after the other great coup in Carrick-on-Suir. They showed that the Republican Army was by no means at the end of its resources in Tipperary, at least in the area of the 3rd Tipperary Brigade, that its fighting spirit was not broken, and that it was captained by daring and resourceful leaders who would spare no effort to carry the war against the Free State to a triumphant conclusion.

The lesson was not lost on the enemy. Every precaution was taken to prevent a repetition of such raids as those of Carrick, Callan, Thomastown and Mullinavat. Guards were doubled in all the towns, patrols were more frequent and troops more alert, while large scouting and raiding parties of Free State troops were sent through the country to round up and exterminate the troublesome flying columns of the 3rd Tipperary Brigade.

When Callan had been taken, a large part of the column which had been operating with Lacy retired towards Nine-Mile-House, later crossing the Suir above Carrick to Windgap in Co. Waterford. From there they proceeded to the Nire Valley to their billets in Ballymacarbery, where they were joined on the following Sunday by the Brigadier and the rest of the men fresh from their forays in Thomastown and Mullinavat. Having rested in Ballymacarbery, the columns travelled through Newcastle, Goatenbridge and Clogheen to Burncourt where Brigadier Lacy spent Christmas Eve. On Christmas Day he crossed the Galtees with the men from his own area, leaving the men of the 5th and 6th Battalions in their old quarters between the Galtees, the Knockmealdowns and the Comeraghs.

Chapter VI.

Civil War (5) - January, 1923. Peace Efforts(1):

The year 1923 opened inauspiciously for the 3rd Tipperary Brigade. Free State columns operating in the Tullamaine and Lisronagh districts discovered a number of dug-outs and, what was worse, Army documents, a printing press, and a fairly large quantity of arms and ammunition. Five prisoners were taken, one of whom was wounded. These events occurred on Sunday, January 7th. They were quickly followed by still more dire occurrences, one of which resulted in the death of Commandant Martin ("Sparky") Breen, O/C No. 1 Flying Column, on January 10th.

Commandant Breen had visited his home and was returning through the fields with two companions when the three men were observed by a party of Free State troops who were approaching Tipperary town from the direction of Limerick Junction. The officer commanding the troops called upon the three men to halt and upon their refusal to do so ordered the troops to open fire. Commandant Breen and his companions thereupon got under cover behind a fence and returned the fire. Meanwhile some of the Free State party had outflanked them, thus cutting off their retreat. The three Republicans were surrounded but, though they had no means of escape they refused to surrender. To their mind it was better to die fighting with gun in hand than to be put up against a barrack wall and shot - a fate which might well be theirs if captured in arms. The fight, such as it was, lasted hardly two minutes. "Sparky" Breen's parablellum jammed and he fell dead, shot through the head. One of his companions, Captain Denis Ryan, was fatally wounded, dying six months later as a result of wounds received in that fight,

while the third man, James McCluskey, surrendered to the Free State troops.

Thus fell Commandant Martin Breen at the age of twenty-six years. From the inception of the Irish Volunteers he had taken a prominent part in the fight for freedom and had proved himself a soldier full of courage and daring in the war against the Black and Tans. It was one of the tragic ironies of the time that he should eventually meet his death at the hands of his own countrymen, almost at the threshold of his own home.

Meanwhile the war went on with unabated vigour all over the land, and the roll of dead and wounded mounted daily on both sides. The policy of executions was now in full swing and by the end of January fifty-five officers and men of the Irish Republican Army had suffered the extreme penalty. The policy of executions begot a policy of reprisals on the other side which in turn led to counter-reprisals by the Free State forces.

The first executions to take place in Co. Tipperary were those at Roscrea on January 15th, when Fred Burke, Patrick Russell, Martin O'Shea and Patrick MacNamara of the 1st Tipperary Brigade faced the firing squad. Executions were also expected in South Tipperary. In Emmet Barracks, Clonmel, a number of prisoners, including Seán Cooney and Patrick Brennan, lay under sentence of death, having been captured in arms against the Free State Government. To prevent the execution of these men the Brigadier and Vice-Brigadier of the 3rd Tipperary Brigade issued a warning to the Free State military authorities and to certain public representatives known to support the Free State Government that they would be held responsible for the execution of any members of the brigade and would be dealt with accordingly. The warning received by members of public boards was as follows:

"Should any officer or man of the 3rd Tipperary Brigade area be executed in or outside the Brigade Area you, and certain members of your Board, will be deemed participants in the crime, and will be dealt with accordingly - War, Truce, or Peace.

(Signed) Denis Lacy,
William Quirke".

The system of sentencing captured men and then holding them as hostages to be executed in case of attacks made by the Army of the Republic on the Free State forces now became general. The Republican authorities decided to retaliate by seizing and holding as hostages prominent supporters of the Free State Government. It was presumably in pursuance of this policy that Senator John Bagwell of Marlfield, Clonmel, was arrested in Dublin on Tuesday, January 30th, and removed to an unknown destination by members of the I.R.A.

Immediately following on the arrest and detention of Senator Bagwell a proclamation was issued by Major-General Hogan, G.O.C. Dublin Command of the Free State Army, threatening reprisals if Senator Bagwell were not released within forty-eight hours. This proclamation by General Hogan drew forth a counter-proclamation from General Liam Lynch, Chief of Staff of the Irish Republican Army.

Liam Lynch's proclamation charged the Free State Government with having suppressed the legitimate Parliament of the nation and usurped the Government, and with endeavouring to make good their usurpation and to destroy the Republic by resorting to the infamous practice of shooting Republican soldiers taken by them as prisoners of war. It declared flatly that the Army of the Republic would no longer suffer its members to be thus dealt with and the international usages of war violated with impunity. Finally, it gave notice that

the hostages taken by the I.R.A. would not be set at liberty but that if any punitive action were taken by the Free State Government every member of that Government and its Parliament would be held responsible and would be visited with the punishment they deserved.

A policy of reprisal and counter-reprisal now held sway and continued in ever-growing intensity until the end of the war. Executions on one side were followed in many cases by counter-executions on the other side while mansions and houses of prominent supporters of the Irish Free State were given to the flames. Tullamaine Castle and other Tipperary mansions had been burned in the closing months of 1922. The campaign was continued in 1923, one of the first victims being Senator John Bagwell whose beautiful residence at Marlfield was completely destroyed on January 9th.

As the winter drew to a close and the days began to grow longer, the military position grew steadily worse. Already defeat seemed inevitable and discouragement spread through the ranks. The Free State army had the people's support while the Republican policy of making war on the railways, though a military necessity from their point of view, tended to alienate the sympathies of even the minority who still supported them, threatening as it did, to engulf the nation in economic ruin.

Soon after the death of Commandant Martin Breen a new Brigade Column had been formed or, rather, the former column had been reorganised under the command of Michael Sheehan. This column was in action at The Commons, near Ballingarry, on January 15th, when contact was made with a large body of Free State troops comprising a cycling column, two lorry-loads of troops and two armoured lancia cars. In the engagement

which followed, one of the Free State troops was killed and two Republicans were taken prisoners. Another engagement which occurred on the following day near Nine-Mile-House resulted in the death of another Free State soldier. The fight lasted until darkness had set in, when the column withdrew without sustaining any casualties.

The two Brigade Columns now moved in the direction of Kilfeacle where, being joined by Brigadier Lacy, they ambushed a motor car containing a party of the Dublin Guards. After a short, though sharp, struggle in which a lieutenant and a sergeant lost their lives, the military party surrendered the officer in charge (Commandant O'Connor) and his orderly being taken prisoners. Having sprinkled the car with petrol and set it alight, the Republican columns retired. On the following evening, however, the same columns encountered a strong detachment of Free State troops at Grange and a brisk action developed in which John Crowe, who commanded a machine-gun section in No. 1 Column, was badly wounded in the arm and taken prisoner, while Commandant O'Connor succeeded in making his escape during the confused fighting which followed. The Republicans were forced to retire suffering some casualties and the wounded machine-gunner was removed to Tipperary Hospital where it was found necessary to have his arm amputated.

Following the engagement at Grange the Republican columns were scattered, the main body of No. 2 Column retreating through the Glen of Aherlow and over the Galtees to their own area while some few remained with Sheehan's column and retired with it in the direction of Hollyford where a number of them was captured on the following Sunday by Free State troops engaged in large-scale round-up operations in that area. Among the men who fell into the

enemy's hands on this occasion were Patrick Kennedy, Edward Hayes, James Ryan, Con O'Keefe, and James Carew of the 3rd Battalion; and John ("Buddy") O'Donoghue, Michael Hibbert and Patrick Hally of the 5th Battalion.

While the events related in the preceding paragraph were taking place in the Hollyford district the fight blazed up once more on the Tipperary-Kilkenny border when, on January 19th, a large column of Free State troops advancing through the hilly country around Sliabh na mBan, came into conflict with another Republican column operating in that area. The Free State troops were engaged in extensive - and, be it said, intensive - searching operations, and having left Mullinahone, were proceeding towards Nine-Mile-House, searching and raiding as they went. They were advancing on foot in extended formation along the road, preceded by two armoured Lancia cars and followed by the lorries which had conveyed them from Clonmel, when, on approaching a house with the intention of raiding and searching it, they were fired on by a small group of Republican troops who were billeted in the house. After a brief exchange of shots the Republicans withdrew through the fields to the rear of the house until they reached the main column which had taken up positions commanding the road on the Clonmel side of Nine-Mile-House. Here a barricade had been erected and here the column maintained its positions in the face of intense rifle and machine-gun fire until nightfall. The column then made an orderly withdrawal under cover of darkness without suffering the loss of a single man. The Free State forces, who had one killed and one (Vice-Commandant Tom Halpin) wounded, made no attempt to follow up the column. Evidently, they had seen enough fighting for one day; climbing into their lorries they returned post haste to Clonmel.

Meanwhile, in spite of some local successes, the military position continued to deteriorate. In Cork, Kerry and Tipperary, where the Republican forces were stronger and better organised than in any other part of Ireland, a feeling of despondency began to pervade the ranks. Every other day saw the capture of officers of high rank. Divisional, Brigade and Battalion Staffs were being sadly depleted and, though vacancies were filled as soon as they occurred, it was becoming increasingly difficult to find suitable men for such positions, and the frequent changes on the staffs, due to the capture or death of officers, coupled with the capture of official files and correspondence by the enemy, tended to produce a state of confusion and disorganisation.

Large-scale "sweeping" operations were now being carried out by enemy forces in the southern and western areas, and these contributed in no little degree to the final collapse of the military arm of the Republic. Talks of peace negotiations were rumoured or hinted at since late December. The names of many prominent officers, including that of Dan Breen, were mentioned in connection with these negotiations, and although Dan Breen and others repeatedly denied that there was any truth in these rumours, the rumours still persisted. Later on, Tom Barry, the Archbishop of Cashel (Monsignor Harty) and others were involved in negotiations which, though they broke down at the time, deserve mention here because of their effect on the morale of the Republican forces. We shall consider them in some detail in the next section.

The extensive round-up operations which commenced in the latter part of January continued throughout February and March. So successful were they from the Free State point of view that by the middle of April it might be said with truth that

all organised resistance had collapsed and only small and scattered bands of Republican guerillas still held out in the mountain fastnesses and more remote areas.

One such operation carried out towards the end of January included in its ambit the Knockmealdown and Galtee Mountains with the area lying in between, and the Glen of Aherlow. Newcastle, Ballymacarbery, Ballinamult, Clogheen, Ballyporeen, Burncourt and the Glen - all were visited in turn by large bodies of enemy troops. During these operations Seán Fitzpatrick, Divisional-Adjutant; Michael Fitzpatrick, Divisional Quartermaster, and Bob de Courcy, Divisional O/C Engineers, were captured on the slopes of the Galtees when the house in which they were staying was surrounded. With them was captured Vice-Comdt. Delahunty of Clerihan. About the same time two more officers of the Brigade Staff were captured at Lisfuncheon near Burncourt, namely, Tom Lynch, at that time Brigade Adjutant, and Tommy Ryan, O/C Communications. At Newcastle, Dinny Lacy and the I.R.A. columns were almost surrounded by enemy troops from Dungarvan, Cappoquin, Mitchelstown, Cahir and Clonmel. Fighting their way out, the Republicans suffered some casualties in the Ballinamult district, three being captured and some wounded. The column evaded pursuit, however, and reaching Ballymacarbery, proceeded to Russellstown, where the men rested. It was about this time, or a little later, that Brigade H.Q. which, since the evacuation of Clonmel had been located in the Ballybacon area, was removed to the Rosegreen area which had been the H.Q. of the brigade during the greater part of the War of Independence.

At this juncture the Free State authorities created a first-class sensation when they disclosed the name of a Republican officer of high rank who had been captured near Ballylooby about a week previously. The prisoner was none

other than General Liam Deasy, Deputy Chief of Staff of the I.R.A. Liam Deasy, who had been described by Michael Collins in a press interview as the most formidable opponent of the Government on the Republican side - which was; of course, an exaggeration - had already come to the conclusion that the war should be ended, believing that further resistance was useless and would not benefit the nation. Brought to Clonmel and sentenced to death, he asked for a delay of execution until he could communicate with the leaders on the Republican side. He was allowed to do so, however, only on condition that he would sign a demand for an immediate and unconditional surrender of all arms and men. This he did, and enclosed with the document a letter in which he explained the reasons which led him to believe that further resistance was futile and would not be in the interests of the nation. He thought that the time had come to end the war and to open peace discussions with this object in view.

Following this move on the part of Liam Deasy a number of Republican prisoners in Limerick Jail asked that four of their number might be permitted to go out on parole to try to get their leaders to agree to a cessation of the armed struggle, which, they said, had gone far enough and ought to stop. This appeal was followed by that of ninety-eight prisoners in Clonmel who, on February 10th, addressed the following letter to Major-General Prout:

"We can understand by the public Press that the political prisoners in other prisons have applied for parole for the purpose of helping to secure peace. A meeting of the prisoners here has been held this evening, and we apply to you for parole for four men selected by the prisoners to carry our views to the men outside who are in a

position to make a settlement, as we also are of opinion that the continuation of civil strife between brothers in arms would result in a victory for England.

The names of the men selected for parole are as follows: - Denis Lonergan, Martin Mullally, Thomas Fahy, Patrick Brennan.

(Signed) J. Hahessy,
O/C Prisoners".

Meanwhile General Liam Lynch had replied to Liam Deasy on behalf of the Republican Government and the Army Council. The substance of the letter was that the proposals contained in Deasy's letter and enclosure could not be considered.

Following Deasy's appeal, a proclamation was issued bearing the signature of "Risteard Ó Maolchatha, General, Commander-in-Chief" of the Free State forces, offering amnesty to all persons then in arms against the Free State Government who would surrender with arms on or before Sunday, February 18th, 1923. It does not appear that any considerable number of Republicans surrendered as a result of this offer.

Many attempts to bring about peace had already been made both by private individuals and by public bodies. All had failed, however, mainly owing to the Free State Government's insistence on the unconditional surrender of all men and arms. We propose in the following section to give a brief account of the more important of those peace efforts.

Peace Efforts (2):

The first peace effort was made at the very outbreak of the war. Madame Gonne MacBride, Mrs. Sheehy Skeffington and other women, with the leader of the Labour Party, Mr.

Thomas Johnson, and the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Mr. Laurence O'Neill, formed a Peace Committee, and sent delegations to interview the leaders on both sides. The Provisional Government insisted that the Republicans should surrender their arms. The Republicans refused to surrender their arms but declared their readiness to cease fighting and return to their homes while retaining their arms. As the other side persisted in demanding a surrender of arms, this peace move came to nothing.

The Archbishop of Dublin now intervened and, with the Lord Mayor, and Mr. Cathal O'Shannon of the Labour Party, tried to make peace. These efforts also proved futile. It was proposed that both armies should retire from their positions and the Dáil be convened to deal with the dispute. This was agreed to by the Republicans but rejected by the Provisional Government. So the war went on waged, indeed, in the name of the people, but waged "without a mandate from the people and without consulting the representatives of the people". The Labour Party, and even supporters of the pro-Treaty party itself protested against the repeated prorogation of Parliament and demanded that Dáil Éireann be convened to deal with the situation; but the Dáil was postponed five times, and when the Provisional Parliament did eventually assemble on September 9th, there was no more talk of peace.

A "People's Rights Association" which had been formed with the intention of initiating peace discussions approached General Liam Lynch. He replied that defensive action on the part of the Republican forces would cease when the Provisional Government ceased its attack on them. He added: "If the Second Dáil, which is the Government of the Republic, or any other elected assembly, carry on such Government, I see no difficulty as to the allegiance of the army".

Cosgrave also replied to the "People's Rights Association". He declared that the Second Dáil no longer existed, its place having been taken by the Provisional Parliament which he described as the "Sovereign Assembly of Ireland" and whose authority, he declared, the "Irregulars" had flouted. Thus ended another effort to secure peace.

Other efforts were being made in private. Men on both sides who had been comrades in arms against the British still hoped for an honourable peace. Many of the Republican leaders had no enthusiasm for the war, feeling that it was a pure waste of Irish effort which would in no way advance the interests of the nation. On the contrary, they thought that by engaging in this fratricidal strife Irishmen on both sides were playing into England's hands and gratifying Ireland's bitterest enemies.

It cannot be doubted that many of the men on the other side also genuinely desired peace. The swift rush of events had swept many willy-nilly into a war which few wanted, but which once let loose could not be controlled. Many far-seeing men on both sides realised that nothing would be gained by allowing this disastrous struggle to go on, and that the sooner it could be ended the better for Ireland and the national interests.

Michael Collins himself appeared to be on the point of attempting to seek a settlement shortly before his death. It has been said that he had announced (privately) his intention of getting into touch with de Valera in an effort to put an end to the conflict. He did, undoubtedly, get in touch with Dan Breen, who received a message through an intermediary that Collins wanted to meet him. Breen discussed the message with General Liam Lynch and, with his knowledge and approval, set out for Cork to meet Collins. Unfortunately,

the projected meeting never took place. Michael Collins was killed on the way, and thus another opportunity was lost. What would have been the outcome of the projected meeting between Breen and Collins is something on which we can only speculate, and such speculation would now be futile.

Rumours of peace talks began to circulate again about Christmas, 1922, and on this occasion as on the former, Dan Breen's name was mentioned. These rumours found their way into the Press, and the special correspondent of the "Daily Mail" in Dublin claimed that peace negotiations were being conducted with "Mr. Dan Breen". This statement evoked a formal denial both from Comdt.-General Breen and from the Free State Government. Some time later the Dublin correspondent of the "Observer" (London) obtained an interview with Dan Breen, portion of which we reproduce here:

"The fact is", writes the correspondent, "and I leave it to Breen himself, that while he is as much in favour of peace as anyone could be, he has made no move whatever. His business is to fight. He leaves peace-making to others.

Indeed, when I saw him, Breen was panoplied for war rather than for peace. He carried, slung from his shoulder, a formidable machine-gun, and his companion was similarly accoutred. How I came to meet Breen need not be explained here. Sufficient to say that for three hours we talked peace, and at the end of that time we had got no further than the pious expression from Breen that he and his associates wanted peace as much as anyone else, and they would not prolong the struggle one moment longer than necessary. It is true that many people have approached him on the subject and many schemes have been submitted to him, but they have evoked no response".

On January 8th, 1923, Dan Breen was interviewed by the Dublin representative of the "Chicago Tribune". The question of peace negotiations was again touched upon and Comdt.-General Breen pointed out the necessity of coming to an understanding as to the basis of peace since, without such an understanding, a truce would be useless. He commented on Mr. Cosgrave's letter to the Longford County Council in which it was stated:

"The minority made the war, and now, when they are beaten, they squeal.

I want Mr. Cosgrave to understand clearly", said Dan Breen, "that it was he who made the war on us, and as we are by no means beaten, it is not necessary for us to squeal. I would like him to understand that when we were fighting the Black and Tans we did not squeal. In any case the resolutions which were sent to Mr. Cosgrave were not passed by us.

I am willing to agree to the expressed will of the people and to accept the decision of a general election. And by that I mean the whole of Ireland, including the northern counties. I would insist on the whole of Ireland coming in, even if we had to fight them in. The six counties could have been got in but for the weakness of the delegation which was sent to London and accepted the Treaty.

The plain people of this country seem to think that we are not out for peace, and that we do not want peace. That is a mistake. Let them remember that we who have fought for five years under conditions that are known only to ourselves are only human. You can take my word for it that we do not want to prolong this struggle one moment longer than is necessary".

The ex-I.R.A. men who had remained neutral on the outbreak of the Civil War had interested themselves in a peace campaign towards the end of 1922. At a meeting of the ex-officers of the Mid-Tipperary Brigade held in Thurles about the end of December, a resolution was passed calling on the Free State Government and the Republican leaders to meet in conference with a view to ending the war. They also called on all neutral ex-officers throughout the country to take joint action in the hope that by so doing a happy and lasting peace might be brought about.

Mr. Cosgrave's reply to this resolution insisted that the basis of peace must be that the Treaty should stand without abrogation, explicit or implied, of any part of it. He also insisted that "the Oireachtas established under the Treaty and Constitution shall be the sole sovereign authority within the jurisdiction assigned to it in those instruments." Needless to say no Republican could accept those conditions as the basis of peace.

"The Neutral I.R.A. Men's Association" now attempted to bring about an agreement and with this object in view appealed to both sides to agree to a truce of one month. This appeal too, fell on deaf ears, neither the Free State nor the Republican authorities being willing to consider the proposal. Nevertheless, the Association did not cease in its efforts to attain peace.

A new impetus was given to the peace movement by the intervention of the Archbishop of Cashel and other prominent persons, clerical and lay. The proposals of Archbishop Harty were communicated to Comdt.-General Tom Barry by the Rev. Father T. Duggan (now Monsignor Duggan), Cork, with the request that Comdt.-General Barry would transmit copies of the proposals to the various members of the I.R.A. Executive.

This request was acceded to, and though the matter seems to have ended there, at least for the time being, it is interesting to note that paragraphs two and three of the Archbishop's proposals as given below were embodied in the proposals submitted by President de Valera on behalf of the Irish Republican Government and the Army Command to the Government of the Irish Free State in May, 1923. The Archbishop's proposals were as follows: -

- (1) The immediate cessation of hostilities by the calling off of all activities and operations by the I.R.A;
- (2) The dumping of all arms and munitions by the Republican forces under the charge of battalion commandants to be responsible that the arms will not be used against the Free State Government or forces;
- (3) Subsequent to a General Election the arms and munitions to be handed over to the elected Government of the country.

This attempt at peace-making also came to nothing, the proposals being rejected absolutely by the spokesman of the Free State Government, Mr. Kevin O'Higgins, who stated that there could be no truce on such a basis. Thus ended one more attempt to bring peace to the distracted and sorely-tried people of Ireland.

Chapter V11.

The Last Phase:

The war was going badly for the I.R.A. at this time. It was now early spring; the winter was over and the days were beginning to get longer. Soon summer would be back with its long bright days and the respite afforded the harried columns by the hours of darkness would be at an end. Already the leaders were beginning to ask themselves if the men would be able to carry on a summer campaign, and even the most optimistic had to admit that such a campaign was hardly possible in the then-existing conditions.

The army, indeed, was rapidly approaching a position little short of desperate. Daily the toll of dead and wounded mounted. Daily the number of prisoners in jails and internment camps grew, while the Active Service Units on the field of battle were daily dwindling away. In South Tipperary the enemy troops continued to round up prisoners on a large scale. The harassed columns were compelled to move from place to place, faced with overwhelming odds, and finding it increasingly difficult even to exist. In some cases the men were almost in rags, and the larger columns were breaking up into small and scattered units.

On February 2nd, large bodies of Free State troops from Clonmel, Carrick and Kilmacthomas, carried out extensive operations in the Windgap and Rathgormack areas resulting in the discovery and destruction of two dug-outs, the seizure of a large quantity of arms, ammunition and equipment, and the capture of six prisoners including the Officer Commanding the 8th Battalion (Commandant T. Fahy) and the Battalion Adjutant (E. Byrne).

In the Railstown district a large haul of arms and ammunition was captured by enemy troops from Cashel who were engaged in rounding-up operations, and on February 6th four prisoners were taken at Kilcash by troops from Clonmel. During this latter operation the Republican troops opened fire on the Free State raiding party from a house, the Free State Commander, Captain Dunne, receiving a bullet wound in the neck. On the same day troops from Fethard and Clonmel carried out large-scale sweeping operations in the Sliabh na mBan area through Clooneen, Kylaclay, Carrignaclear, Glenascaugh and Toor. At Bawndaniel they encountered a party of the I.R.A. and an engagement resulted which lasted almost two hours. During these operations twelve Volunteers were captured, five of whom were taken in arms.

A whole series of captures during the following week bore eloquent testimony to the fact that the 3rd Tipperary Brigade was rapidly disintegrating. On Tuesday, February 13th, a column of Free State soldiers from Clonmel surrounded the residence of Lord Donoughmore at Knocklofty, having, it is supposed, received information to the effect that certain members of the I.R.A. were sleeping there. It was, indeed, a favourite haunt of the columns during the civil war period and there was always a spare bed to be had there. The Free State troops, having surrounded the house, directed heavy machine-gun fire on the window of the room in which the men were sleeping. One of the Volunteers, Martin Maher, 'A' Company, 5th Battalion, was badly wounded, his arm being shattered by machine-gun bullets. He was removed to hospital in an ambulance after the surrender, while his five companions were conveyed to Emmet Barracks, Clonmel, under a heavy guard. All the prisoners were members of 'A' Company, 5th Battalion, and had been on active service with No. 2 Flying Column though they were not attached to it at the time of

their capture, being then engaged on special duty. Their names were: Christy Riordan, Larry Delaney, John Burke, Tommy Murray, and Fitzgerald, all natives of Clonmel.

On the day following the captures recorded above, six more Republican soldiers, members of the 6th Battalion, were captured near Ardfinnan, and next day troops from Clonmel captured four more in the Newcastle district, including Commandant Jerome Davin, O/C 1st Battalion, and Captain Con Scanlan, 5th Battalion. More prisoners were taken in the Kilmacomma area and Captain Tom Quinlan of Derrinlaur was arrested at his home by Free State raiding parties from Carrick.

It is evident from what has been narrated in the preceding paragraphs that the war had now reached a critical stage in South Tipperary. Yet, the losses sustained by the Brigade heretofore were as nothing in comparison to the blow it received on Sunday, February 18th, when its noble and courageous leader, Brigadier Dinny Lacy, was killed in action in the Glen of Aherlow. "No pen", says his biographer, "can adequately depict the grief which was felt by his comrades in arms and in prison, by the numerous friends and staunch supporters of the cause, when the news of his death became known".

It is not generally known - though the fact was mentioned at the inquest - that Commandant Dinny Lacy's presence in the neighbourhood in which he met his early and tragic death was due solely to the fact that he had received a communication from the Association of Neutral Ex-Officers of the I.R.A. in South Tipperary with a view to discussing peace proposals, and a meeting for this purpose had been arranged to be held at Rossadrehid in the Glen of Aherlow.

The Association of Neutral Ex-Officers has been already mentioned in these pages and some idea has been given of their activities in seeking to bring about a speedy termination to the war then raging. Great hopes had been held with regard to the meeting to be held at Rossadrehid, as Commandant Dinny Lacy was known to be one of the most resolute and determined of the leaders in arms against the Free State, yet, notwithstanding all this, his views were understood to be favourable to peace at this time. He had come to the Glen at great personal risk to himself, in the interests of peace, and the Association of Neutral Ex-I.R.A. Men considered that his death at this juncture was, on that account, a great loss to the country.

Commandant Lacy left Mount Bruis on February 17th, with seventeen men, and reached Ballydavid that evening, weary and footsore. Having made arrangements with the men to meet next day at Rossadrehid at about three o'clock in the afternoon, he divided them up into small parties and sent them to their respective billets. He himself, with Vice-Commandant Paddy MacDonagh and Captain William Allen, stayed for the night at the house of a farmer, Rody Ryan of Ballydavid. The remainder of the men were billeted at Ashgrove House and at other houses in the vicinity.

At this very time, unknown to the I.R.A., strong Free State columns were preparing to invest the Glen of Aherlow with a view to commencing one of the most extensive round-up operations yet undertaken in Tipperary. Early on Sunday morning the operations commenced and continued throughout the day. It was a sorry day for Tipperary and, indeed, for Ireland. It has been stated that not less than a thousand troops took part, drawn from Cahir, Cashel, Clonmel, Tipperary, and even from barracks as far away as Limerick. The Glen

was surrounded, and columns of troops entered from every side.

The Ballydavid area was soon the scene of operations, and the sound of firing from the direction of Ashgrove House was the first intimation Lacy received that his men were being attacked. It was then about ten o'clock on Sunday morning. Dinny determined instantly on going to the aid of his men and, calling his two comrades, prepared to set out across the fields. Hardly had they reached the door of the house when they saw a party of Free State soldiers approaching. Fire was opened immediately by Lacy and his companions and the enemy, taking cover behind the wall of the farmyard, replied vigorously. Lacy fired steadily at the enemy from the doorway while Vice-Commandant MacDonagh took up his position at the parlour window and Captain Allen commenced firing from the kitchen window.

The house was by this time surrounded, and Paddy MacDonagh found himself caught between two fires; the parlour in which he was stationed had a window at the back as well as at the front and fire was being directed at both windows. MacDonagh was badly wounded in the hip as a result of the attack from the rear, and fell on the floor, bleeding profusely. Just then another party of soldiers appeared on the road about one hundred yards from the house, armed with rifles and a Lewis gun. Such was the intensity of the battle and the accuracy of the shooting that one of the Free State party on the road had his rifle shattered in his hand by a bullet fired from the house. A Lewis gun was thereupon directed on the window from which the firing was proceeding and soon the position inside the house became untenable. Lacy decided to make a dash for liberty, trusting to the element of surprise and the very audacity of the move to get him through the enemy positions.

MacDonagh, badly wounded though he was, rose to join his two companions in their dash for freedom. Pouring a stream of lead from their automatics into the ranks of the surprised soldiers they threw them into disorder. Three of the soldiers fell mortally wounded, while the rest scattered in all directions like chaff before the wind. The three I.R.A. officers crossed into a field but MacDonagh, suffering intense pain and weak from loss of blood, having been wounded again, this time on the left side of the stomach, was unable to go any farther. Reluctantly his comrades were compelled to leave him behind, lying in a ditch. Here he was later discovered by the Free Staters and removed to the house where he was attended by a priest who administered the Last Sacraments, and by a sergeant of the Army Medical Corps who bandaged his wounds. He was later removed to Tipperary hospital where he died the following day.

Meanwhile, the military party, having recovered from their confusion, set out in pursuit of Lacy and Allen. These now found themselves surrounded on all sides. An attempt to cross the river was a failure and they had to turn back again. They now found themselves compelled to cross a high fence under heavy fire. Dinny Lacy mounted the fence first, and stretching down his hand helped his comrade up beside him. As he leaped down on the other side his automatic fell from his hand. Stooping to pick it up he heard the cry: "Hands up!" A party of Free State soldiers lay in concealment near the ditch with their guns trained on the lone figure. To think with Dinny was to act. Swiftly his fingers closed upon his gun and, raising it, he fired. Almost simultaneously came the crash of the rifles and the brave and chivalrous Dinny Lacy, the idol of his men, fell to the ground with a bullet buried in his brain.

Friend and foe united in praising the fallen hero. "For seven centuries and more" wrote a former comrade in arms, "the sword of freedom has been wielded by many a noble soldier in this county, both prince and peasant, but none nobler than Dinny. No lion in Africa was braver than he, no monk in Melleray holier, no man in Ireland more maligned..... Dinny, Dinny! My heart is sore, thinking of you to-night. You are still the beloved chieftain of what remains of the brigade - the brigade that was the pride of your life".

The hostile Press gave the dead leader his meed of praise: "An iron disciplinarian, a resourceful and tireless man, he is a leader whom the Irregulars will find it impossible to replace..... The stubbornness of his views was only equalled by his remorseless energy in action.....

He was by far the most prominent and formidable leader in the anti-Government forces in South Tipperary. He took a very active part in the fight against the British military and Black and Tans, and was the leader of every local engagement of note during that period".

Even some of the men who had opposed him in arms paid tribute to his bravery, saying that "they knew Denis Lacy in the old days, and that a more gallant and fearless Irishman never lived, and none deplored more deeply than they the tragic circumstances under which he met his death."

Lacy's comrade was captured unwounded, but the fight at Ashgrove House continued for three and a half hours during which a veritable hail of lead from rifles and machine-guns was poured into the building, the defenders maintaining a stout resistance and replying vigorously to the fire with rifles and Thompson guns. A bombing attack was then made upon the building, the interior of which was wrecked, and the ammunition of the defenders being exhausted, the little garrison of five men was compelled to surrender. The

names of the men who defended Ashgrove House are: - Matthew Maher and Patrick Dalton of Tipperary (4th Battalion); Michael O'Neill of Laffansbridge (7th Battalion); Michael Connors of Ballylooby (6th Battalion) and Michael Mockler of Ballinalough, Lisronagh (5th Battalion). Other men captured nearby were: - Michael O'Donnell of Fethard, John Kennedy of Rossmore, Michael Dwyer of Carrick (wounded) and M. Cahill and M. O'Shea of Tipperary representing the 1st, 3rd, 8th and 4th Battalions.

The war went on, but the Republican cause was doomed. That this was the case was becoming daily more and more apparent. Large bodies of Free State troops swooped through the country sweeping all suspects into the net. In the Fethard, Killenaule and Ballingarry areas many Volunteers were rounded up. Troops from Clonmel and Cahir carried out extensive raiding operations on the two days following Lacy's death, all the country lying between Ardfinnan and Mitchelstown as well as the area between Cahir and Cashel being thoroughly searched. Amongst the prisoners taken in this round-up were Comdt. Maurice Meade, O/C 2nd Battalion, who was captured in the Mitchelstown district, and the O/C of a Waterford Battalion (Comdt. Moloney) who was captured near Ardfinnan.

Early in the following week troops from Thurles, Tipperary and East Limerick took part in large-scale sweeping operations in the Ballingarry and The Commons district while the Glen of Aherlow and the Galtees were also thoroughly scoured. During the operations in the Glen a slight engagement took place at Glencushnabinna but there were no casualties on either side.

The state of the army was now desperate. On February 26th a Council meeting of the 1st Southern Division was held

and reports submitted by the various Brigadiers revealed clearly the plight in which they found themselves. Most of the reports took the view that a summer campaign was unthinkable, while one Commandant expressed his opinion that the army would be "wiped out" in a very short time. The Divisional Commander was of the opinion that the men of the 1st Southern Division had been fought to a standstill. This was also the considered opinion of the Divisional Adjutant who thought, moreover, that even if the Army Executive decided to carry on the war the men would refuse to carry arms. As the 1st Southern Division included the Cork and Kerry brigades which were considered to be among the very best in the Army of the Republic, it is evident that the army as a whole was now reduced to a state in which it was no longer capable of carrying on the war, and that it could only be a matter of time until all organised resistance would cease.

The great round-up continued, and early in March Con Moloney, who had succeeded Liam Deasy as Deputy Chief of Staff, was seriously wounded and taken prisoner in a fight in the Glen of Aherlow, two of his Staff Officers being captured with him, viz., his brother, Commandant Jim Moloney, and Tom Conway of Tipperary, the latter of whom was also wounded seriously. This happened on March 7th when the Glen was invested by troops from Limerick and Tipperary. The men were discovered by the Free State forces in a hut on the slopes of the Galtees above Rossadrehid. The three I.R.A. officers dashed from the hut under heavy fire, emptying the contents of their revolvers into the ranks of the enemy as they went, and, though closely pursued by the troops, succeeded in escaping, aided as they were by the morning mists and the friendly shelter of the woods. Later that day they ran into a detachment of the enemy at Cloghera, about two

miles east of Rossadrehid. The Free State party opened fire and the others replied, Con Moloney using a Thompson gun while his companions used rifles. After a fight of about twenty minutes Con Moloney was badly wounded in the thigh, while Tom Conway was wounded in the head and body, his right arm being shattered. None of the attackers was injured though the bullets in some cases pierced the soldiers' great coats.

The number of prisoners in jails and internment camps at this period is stated by Miss Macardle to have been estimated as about twelve thousand. Many of the leaders had come at last to recognise the hopelessness of their position and suggested that some steps should be taken to bring the war to an end. These suggestions, brought to the notice of Liam Lynch, and emanating from officers whose loyalty could not be doubted and who, as Miss Macardle says, represented some of the most active and resolute sections of the army, caused the Chief of Staff to consider the matter carefully and to consult his colleagues in the South regarding the course of action to be adopted. Accordingly he left Dublin and proceeded to the south on what was to be his last journey.

Finding that there was a general consensus of opinion among the senior officers that the Army Executive should meet to discuss the situation, General Lynch convened a meeting of the Executive. As many of the Executive as were available attended this meeting which was held in the cottage of Pierry Wall, Knocknaree, Ballymacarbery. Among the members of the Army Executive present on this occasion was the former Vice-Brigadier of the 3rd Tipperary Brigade, Bill Quirke, now O/C 2nd Southern Division, having succeeded Seamus Robinson, another former Brigadier, in that position. Ten of the

sixteen members of the Executive were present at the meeting which lasted from March 16th to March 23rd. President de Valera attended on behalf of the Republican Government and brought certain peace proposals with him which were laid before the meeting.

The Executive discussed de Valera's peace proposals and reviewed the general military situation. Some of the members, including General Lynch, held that the army was not yet defeated and that the war should go on. Others were of opinion that further resistance was useless. Some held that there should be a surrender of arms; others opposed this but were willing to end the war and "dump" arms. A resolution proposed by Comdt. Gen. Tom Barry that "further armed resistance and operations against the Free State Government will not further the cause of the independence of the country" was defeated by only one vote, five voting for the resolution and six against. It was decided eventually to adjourn the meeting to April 10th when it was hoped the absent members of the Executive might be able to attend.

Meantime the Free State army continued its operations against the I.R.A., each day bringing its quota of captures. The No. 2 Column had by this time practically ceased to exist. A much reduced column was, indeed, still in action, under the command of Jim Nugent, but the large column of the early days was gone and the column operating under Jim Nugent could be more correctly classified as a 5th Battalion A.S.U. than as a Brigade Column in any sense of the word. In the northern area of the brigade the column under Michael Sheehan was still in existence but it, too, was only holding on, and every day its position became more precarious. The Battalion 5 Column under Nugent, harassed and worried by

enemy forces was forced into Co. Waterford for a time - "beaten out of Tipperary", in fact, to use the words of one of the members of the column. Here it joined forces with a Waterford column commanded by Seán O'Meara and operated in the neighbourhood of Dungarvan where the combined columns came into conflict with a large force of enemy troops near Killongford bridge. A second party of the enemy coming along in a Crossley tender joined in the fight which continued for some time until the Republicans, finding themselves in danger of being surrounded, withdrew through the hills towards the Old Parish. There were casualties on both sides, Ned Carrigan of the 5th Battalion, 3rd Tipperary Brigade, being badly wounded. A lieutenant and two privates were wounded on the Free State side. The Tipperary column under Nugent later returned to their own area and it was about this time that a large party of Free Staters who had stopped in Ballymacarbery for refreshments on their way from Dungarvan were fired at by some of the column from Craignagower Wood, three of the soldiers being wounded.

Following the meeting of the Army Executive in the Nire Valley it had become known to the Free State authorities that the civil and military leaders of the Republic were present in the area and elaborate arrangements were made, accordingly, to encircle the mountains of South Tipperary and North and West Waterford with the object of bringing off the most sensational coup of the war.

On April 1st the 3rd Tipperary Brigade lost a fine soldier, a brave officer and a noble character by the death in action of Captain Jerry Kiely of the 4th Battalion. Jerry Kiely was staying with Dan Breen in the house of Stephen MacDonough (father of the late Vice-Comdt., Paddy MacDonagh) at Lisvernane, in the Glen of Aherlow when a party

of Free State troops under Captain O'Dea from Galbally attacked the house. The men inside were taken by surprise but held their fire until the raiders burst in when they opened fire. The Free State commander was mortally wounded by the first shot fired from the kitchen while one of the soldiers was wounded by the second shot. On receiving the fatal wound Captain O'Dea rushed from the house through the front door - by which he had entered - and running round to the back sat down on a dung-hill where he expired. Meanwhile Sergeant English had attempted to open fire on Captain Kiely but his gun jammed and in leaping back into the cover of the porch he tripped and fell. It had been arranged between Dan Breen and Jerry Kiely that they should retreat through the back door, using their grenades to get clear of the enemy, but when Jerry Kiely saw the Free State sergeant trip and fall to the door he saw an opportunity of escaping through the front door and seized it. Springing over the sergeant's prostrate body he rushed on to the road. Having already emptied his revolver he now attempted to use the Thompson gun which he carried. Unfortunately for himself, it jammed after the first shot and Jerry Kiely fell dead on the roadside, shot through the lung. Dan Breen meantime had got clear through the back door, making his escape into the woods with the help of a hand grenade. It was later reported in the Press that Dan Breen had been wounded in the head during the fight. This report was unfounded. "I was not wounded on that night" said Breen many years later, "but I was badly wounded in the heart at the loss of Jerry Kiely. What a man he was! - one of the finest soldiers I have ever met, and a loving comrade".

Meanwhile the net was being drawn still more tightly around the Republican leaders who were to assemble for their second meeting on April 10th. Besides the Army Executive,

many other Commanders were on their way to the rendezvous which was once again in the Nire Valley. Thousands of troops were concentrated in the area by the enemy commanders and the mountains completely invested. It has been estimated that the total number of troops engaged on this operation was close on nine thousand.

Major-General Prout, O/C Waterford Command, who had his Headquarters in Clonmel, later revealed that plans had been laid for an elaborate sweep of the entire area covered by the Comeragh mountains, the Monavullagh mountains and the Knockmealdown mountains in Waterford and Tipperary. From an early hour on the morning of April 10th the roads were swarming with Free State troops pushing out from Cahir, Clogheen, Clonmel, Fethard, Carrick-on-Suir, Kilmacthomas, Rathgormack, Dungarvan, Cappoquin, Lismore and Youghal. There was opposed to this formidable army a handful of Republican soldiers whose combined strength did not exceed twenty armed men.

The account which follows is taken verbatim from an Article which appeared in "Sinn Féin" on April 12th, 1924, and which was written by one who was present at the events therein described:

"On the night of April 9-10th, 1923, General Liam Lynch and a party of officers were billeted a little south of Goatenbridge, at the foot of the Knockmealdown mountains. At 11 a.m. scouts gave the alarm. A column of 'Staters' had appeared on the road, moving toward Goatenbridge.

We rose, and moved to a house higher up on the mountainside. Daylight came, and looking to the north, we saw in the valley below us three columns of 'Staters'. We were not much alarmed. A report had been received the evening before that a

valley to the south-west of us was to be 'rounded-up', and we thought that the forces below us were concentrating to move on it.

About 8 a.m., as we were about to have a cup of tea, a scout from the east ran in, to tell us that another column was coming about 1,000 yards away, across the mountains to our left-rear. Our only line of retreat was thus threatened, and sending word to the scouts watching to the west, we dashed up a glen towards the mountains.

On reaching the head of the glen, we halted to wait for the two scouts, who were armed, one with a Thompson, and the other with a rifle. We numbered seven - General Liam Lynch and five officers armed with revolvers and automatics, and an unarmed local Volunteer. We were carrying a great number of important papers, which we wished to save at all costs.

We were only a few minutes at the head of the glen, and no sign of the scouts coming, when the 'Staters' appeared over a rise, and our first shots were exchanged. We dashed on again, up the mountain, a shallow river-bed affording us cover for about 250 yards. When we reached the end of the river-bed, we had to retreat up a bare, coverless shoulder of the mountain.

This was the chance for the 'Staters'. About fifty of them had a clear view of us at between 300 and 400 yards' range, and they rattled away with their rifles as fast as they could work the bolts. Our return fire with revolvers was, of course, ineffective at that range, but as we staggered along, up the mountain, we fired an odd shot to disconcert their aim.

We had gone about two hundred yards up the shoulder, and the 'Staters' had fired over a thousand shots at us without effect, when a lull came in the firing.

After twenty seconds' silence a single shot rang out, and Liam Lynch fell saying: 'My God! I'm hit, lads!'

One officer (Seán Hyde) was helping him along at the time, as he had been nearly exhausted with the run up the river-bed. Three of us (Frank Aiken, Bill Quirke and Seán Hyde) gathered around him, and found that he was badly wounded through the body. Our grouping together was the signal for intense fire from the 'Staters'. We picked him up and carried him along, one saying, and he repeating, the Act of Contrition.

He was in terrible agony, and the carrying hurt him terribly. Several times he told us to leave him down, and at last, after carrying him a couple of hundred yards further, again Liam told us to leave him down, and ordered us to go on, saying: 'Perhaps they will bandage me when they come up'. We laid him down, took his automatic and notebook, and left him.

It would be impossible to describe our agony of mind in thus parting with our comrade and chief."

We know the rest of the story from the Free State account. The scene of the encounter in which Liam Lynch fell was the high and lonely mountain of Crohan West above Newcastle in Co. Tipperary. The spot is marked to-day by a noble memorial in the form of a Round Tower which dominates the country for miles around and is visible from the plains of South Tipperary over which the columns so often marched in the stirring years with which we are now dealing.

The troops ascending the mountain of Crohan West were units from Clogheen. Advancing in extended formation and taking full advantage of whatever cover was afforded by the brushwood, the bracken and the heather, the men on the right

flank suddenly sighted the seven Republicans on one of the highest slopes. The exchange of shots lasted about twenty minutes, the advance continuing all the time. The military could now observe that one of the men was being carried along by his comrades. As the troops approached closer they saw the wounded man's comrades lay their burden down on the mountain side and continue their retreat.

Some of the Free State soldiers seeing the tall bespectacled man lying on his back in the heather, his eyes closed, and his face pale and drawn, thought they had wounded and captured de Valera. "Are you de Valera?" they asked him. "I am not", he replied, "I am Liam Lynch".

The wounded Chief of Staff received first-aid treatment from his captors and was brought down the mountain in a litter. A priest was summoned and administered spiritual aid to the dying soldier. An ambulance was dispatched from Clonmel to convey him to the hospital where he arrived about 6.30 p.m. There he lingered for a few hours, dying at 8.45 p.m. on Tuesday, April 10th, 1923.

On Wednesday and Thursday the body of the dead Chief lay in state, clad in the grey-green uniform of an officer of the Irish Republican Army. A guard of honour composed of local Cumann na mBan watched by the bier. Great crowds of people visited the chapel in St. Joseph's Hospital to view the body, and the funeral through Clonmel on the first stage of its journey to Fermoy was attended by representatives of all shades of public opinion. Among the many beautiful wreaths which were laid on the grave of the dead leader were two from the soldiers of the 3rd Tipperary Brigade.

The days following the death of General Liam Lynch were days of dark and dismal tragedy - even of dire disaster for the Republican cause. Army chiefs from all parts of Ireland had made their way by circuitous routes to the mountain fastnesses of Tipperary and Waterford only to be scattered again like chaff before the wind. Among the officers who travelled to attend the meeting of the Executive was Austin Stack who, with Daithí Kent, Dan Breen and others had come up from Araglen. After thrilling adventures and hairbreadth escapes from the enemy troops who seemed to be swarming everywhere, they reached the Knockmealdown mountains where they reached Mount Melleray in the early hours of the morning. After a much-needed rest and some food they continued on their way only to run into another column of Free State soldiers. For five days they were wandering to and fro on the mountains running from one danger into another. Three only of the men who came up from Araglen succeeded in getting out of the encirclement, namely, Dan Breen, Andy Kennedy and Maurice Walsh.

The Free State military authorities, knowing that the majority of the Republican Army Chiefs were somewhere in the area, resolved to leave no stone unturned to bring about the great coup on which they had set their hearts. The capture and death of Liam Lynch spurred them on to an even more intense effort and once again the mountains were invested by thousands of troops. And now was commenced what a press correspondent described as "one of the most elaborate combing-out operations undertaken during the present conflict". The troops took up their allotted positions around the mountains on the night preceding the great drive, and at day-break, the rain-soaked columns made a simultaneous advance into the mountains from all directions. They had

come from Waterford, Kilkenny, Carrick-on-Suir, Clonmel, Fethard, Cahir, Clogheen, Ballyporeen, Ballyfuon, Lismore, Cappoquin, Dungarvan, Clonea, Kilmacthomas and Rathgormack, and even included contingents from Cork. The troops from Waterford, Kilkenny, Carrick, Rathgormack, Clonea, Kilmacthomas and Dungarvan pushed into the very heart of the Comeragh and Monavullagh mountains from all sides, while the others concentrated on the Knockmealdown mountains.

During these operations every nook and cranny was penetrated and subjected to a most exacting search. The country was agog with excitement and all kinds of fantastic rumours were in circulation. An unfounded rumour was circulated on Wednesday, April 11th, of the capture of Dan Breen and de Valera near Kilsheelan. Hardly had this report been denied when it was officially announced that Count Plunkett, T.D., Miss Mary MacSwiney, T.D., and Mrs. O'Callaghan, T.D., had been arrested on April 12th, and this was followed on April 14th by news of the capture of Austin Stack. Austin Stack, who was unarmed, offered no resistance when discovered by troops from Cork at Dyrick, not far from Mount Melleray.

Austin Stack had in his possession when captured the draft of a memorandum prepared for the signatures of all the members of the Army Executive who could be brought together. This memorandum authorised the President to order an immediate cessation of hostilities. It is arguable from this that had General Liam Lynch not been killed on that fateful Tuesday and the Army leaders scattered, the Civil War would have ended some weeks earlier than it did, in fact, end. The memorandum was written throughout in Austin Stack's own handwriting and ran as follows: -

"Realising the gravity of the situation of the Army of the Republic, owing to the great odds now facing them, and the losses lately sustained, and being of opinion that further military effort would be futile, and would cause only injury to our country, without obtaining any advantage, and being convinced that the defensive war which has been waged by our army during the past nine or ten months has made it impossible that the Irish people will ever accept less than their full national rights, and fearing it would cause too much delay to await the summoning and holding of a full meeting of the Army Council and of the Executive, we the undersigned members of the Army, do hereby call upon and authorise the President of the Republic to order an immediate cessation of hostilities.

Volunteers are required to hand in their arms to pending the election of a Government the free choice of the people".

Other captures followed that of Austin Stack, but Liam Lynch's companions on the mountain during his last stand succeeded in getting through the cordon, crossing the Suir near Frehans, between Newcastle and Ardfinnan, and reaching the 3rd Tipperary Brigade H.Q. (then at Maher's of Blackcastle) on the 15th April. The Brigade H.Q. was a very secure retreat. It was located at the extreme end of a long barn and so built that the concrete wall appeared to be the gable end. The tightly fitting door, also of concrete, opened and closed, no crevice being visible in the dark barn. To the end of the war this retreat remained undiscovered though Maher's was often raided by enemy troops. During one of these raids, relates former Brigade

Adjutant John Cleary, Seán Hayes (Brigadier in succession to Dinny Lacy), Bill Quirke (Vice-Brigadier) and the Brigade Staff were awakened in the early morning by the raised voice of old Mrs. Maher abusing the Free State soldiers - this being her usual method of warning the inmates. The Free Staters "turned the barn upside down" but discovered nothing.

It was night when Frank Aiken, Bill Quirke, Seán Hyde and Seán Ó Meara arrived at Brigade H.Q. after breaking through the Free State cordon. Shortly afterwards three newcomers made their appearance. These were Brigade Adjutant John Cleary, Brigade I/O Theo English, and Captain Ned Somers, former Free State O/C in Callan who had come over to the Republican side, as already mentioned. These had been trying to get to the Army Executive meeting but had been unable to get through the Free State lines and had to turn back at Poulacapple. When they arrived at Brigade H.Q. they found there was no room for them. Bill Quirke offered to give his place to Ned Somers but Ned refused the offer and went with his two comrades to another "hide-out" at Castleblake, a short distance across the fields from Blackcastle. In this castle a secret room had been built into the old ruin and had been used by the I.R.A. for a long time.

On the following morning, April 16th, two columns of Free State troops from Clonmel converged on the ruined castle at Castleblake. The troops had apparently received information as to the use of the building by the Republicans. The enemy columns were led by Captain Quinlan and Lieutenant Patrick Kennedy - the latter a native of the Rosegreen district and a former member of the I.R.A. in which he had served in pre-truce days. Lieutenant Kennedy having surrounded the building, approached the door and called on

the occupants to surrender. Adjutant Cleary, who was inside the door, surrendered and was made prisoner. The other two men had already retired to the secret room. Lieutenant Kennedy now summoned them to surrender and, receiving no reply, fired three revolver shots through the partition. Aided by his comrade, Lieutenant Moran, he commenced to batter down the partition and had succeeded in removing one of the boards when a bomb flung through the opening by one of the men inside exploded with terrific force in the confined space, hurling Lieutenant Moran across the room and shattering his left arm. Lieutenant Kennedy was mortally wounded, receiving large bomb splinters in the head and chest from the effects of which he died some days later. Nine other soldiers were wounded, though not dangerously.

The sound of the explosion brought soldiers rushing towards the building from all sides as Ned Somers, revolver in hand, emerged from the secret apartment and dashed towards the doorway, firing as he ran. A sentry stationed near the door raised his rifle and fired, killing Captain Somers instantly with a bullet through the brain.

Theo English appeared in the opening almost immediately after his companion, and before the soldiers had recovered from their surprise at his appearance he had reached the doorway, passed through, and was well on his way to freedom when a volley rang out and he dropped dead, shot through the heart. Though a native of Tipperary town and originally a member of the 4th Battalion, he had been attached to the 5th Battalion for the greater portion of his career in the army, being a member of 'A' (Clonmel) Company. He acted as I/O for the 5th Battalion before his promotion to the position of Brigade I/O and was considered a very capable officer by Brigadier Lacy.

When the party of officers at Brigade H.Q. heard of the happenings at Castleblake they hastily vacated their billets in the Brigade H.Q. and left for the Glen of Aherlow, crossing the Suir near Knockgraffon. On the same day three more important I.R.A. officers were captured on the Knockmealdown mountains at Dyrick, almost in the exact spot where Austin Stack had been taken two days previously. One of the officers was Comdt.-Gen. Frank Barrett, O/C 1st Western Division, and another was Seán Gaynor, O/C 3rd Southern Division.

Even this did not complete the list of captures. We have already stated that Dan Breen, Maurice Walsh and Andy Kennedy had managed to get through the Free State cordon after five days and nights on the mountains. Having made their way through, Breen and Walsh headed for the Glen of Aherlow where there was a dug-out used by Dan Breen in a place called Longford, not far from Galbally. Here they threw themselves down exhausted after their recent trying experiences and were soon asleep. With them in the dug-out was Tim Donovan whose father's house was quite close to the dug-out - just below it, in fact. Dan Breen himself has described what happened next: -

"From that sleep I was awakened" he says, "by the heavy tramp of marching men above. I jumped out and looked into the barrels of several Free State rifles. I had no option but to surrender".

This capture was made by troops of the Limerick Command who were operating in the Glen on April 17th when their attention was attracted by a number of cigarette cases on the hillside. On closer inspection the entrance to a dug-out was revealed. The Free State account describes Dan Breen as making his appearance clad only in a shirt and

trousers. "It's alright", he said, "I am Dan Breen". He then surrendered with his two comrades. The three men are stated to have shaken hands with their captors. The Free State authorities in announcing his capture in an official communique the same day claimed that important documents were found on Dan Breen.

The Tipperary columns were by this time falling to pieces. Mick Sheehan's column - or what was left of it - still moved around but did little fighting, finding it difficult even to exist in the conditions now prevailing. Portion of the old 5th Battalion column - the remnant of Tom Sadlier's once fine fighting force - still roved through the Waterford hills led by Jim Nugent, but those columns were but shadows of the well-organised columns that marched at will through South Tipperary and North Waterford four months earlier and took part in the capture of Carrick, Callan and other towns. With the death of Dinny Lacy the Brigade seemed, in a sense, to have died also. Scattered units of the old columns were in hiding here and there or wandered about leaderless the easy prey of any party of Free State troops that came their way. Men were being captured singly or in groups, almost every day, sometimes after a struggle, but more often, as time went on and the war flickered out, without any attempt at resistance.

During the whole month of April the sweeping operations which had been commenced in South Tipperary and North and West Waterford were extended to Kilkenny and Carlow until the whole tract of country between Clonmel and the river Barrow had been thoroughly combed out. So successful were the operations from the Free State point of view that General Prout at length declared himself satisfied that there was no longer any large body of organised forces of the

I.R.A. in the mountains of South Tipperary and Waterford, though it was quite possible, he admitted, owing to the nature of the country, that two or three could be hiding in some of the more isolated places amid the hills. About the end of April some members of Michael Sheehan's column were rounded up in the Carrick area; and in many places, indeed, stragglers from different columns were being taken in by the Free State troops. Most of these men when captured were found to be unarmed.

On April 20th, the Irish Republican Army Executive met at last. The meeting was held at Poulacapple near Mullinahone and twelve members of the Executive were present. Frank Aiken became Chief of Staff in succession to Liam Lynch and after some discussion the meeting decided, one member dissenting, to negotiate for peace on the following basis: -

- (1) That the sovereignty of the Irish nation and the integrity of its territory are inalienable;
- (2) That any instrument purporting to the contrary is, to the extent of its violation of the above principle, null and void.

A special Army Council consisting of four Generals was appointed and empowered to make the final decision for peace or war in conjunction with the Republican Cabinet. The four officers selected were Liam Pilkington, Tom Barry, Seán Hyde and Frank Aiken. These four went to Dublin where they held a consultation with President de Valera and those members of the Cabinet who were available. It was decided unanimously to authorise the President to make a public proclamation of the Republican peace proposals and to order a cessation, for the time being, of aggressive action.

The proclamation was issued on April 27th and was accompanied by an Army Order to all O/Cs ordering the suspension of all offensive operations as from noon on Monday, April 30th. Thus ended the Civil War.

In the course of the present chapter we have allowed ourselves to digress somewhat in order to sketch in the historical and political background. We must now retrace our steps to the beginning of April and resume from that point our story of the 3rd Tipperary Brigade.

On Tuesday, April 3rd, two events occurred which caused no small sensation in Clonmel and the surrounding districts. One was the discovery near Tullameelan Churchyard, about six miles from the town, of the dead bodies of Lieutenants Kennedy and Cruise of the Free State army who had been missing since January 23rd. The other was the shooting dead that same evening of Adjutant Jerry Lyons, 1st Battalion, 3rd Tipperary Brigade, while a prisoner in military custody in Kickham Barracks, Clonmel. These two events were believed to be connected.

As the circumstances in which Lieutenant James Kennedy and Lieutenant George Cruise met their deaths have never heretofore been divulged, and in view of the fact that the Free State military authorities allowed a completely false version of the story to circulate amongst the general public for propaganda purposes, we feel obliged, in the interests of truth and justice to give here the facts as they really occurred, without, however, entering into unnecessary details.

Before telling the story of the execution of the two young officers it may be well to recall the following facts: the bodies, when found, presented a shocking appearance, being in a rather advanced stage of decomposition. It was alleged that the skulls of both men were practically blown away by machine-gun fire. It was also alleged that the unfortunate young men had been kidnapped near Barne by "Irregulars", held as prisoners for some weeks, and then brutally murdered by machine-gun fire, the bodies being buried in a ditch. No motive was alleged for the crime, the implication being, of course, that these two officers were murdered for no other reason than that they were Free State officers.

Every aggravating circumstance in connection with the death of the men was stressed. The gruesome spectacle presented by their bodies when recovered; the fact that they had been off duty and unarmed; their youth - Kennedy being only 23 years of age and Cruise but 19; the burial of the bodies uncoffined in a ditch; the alleged use of machine-guns - all were skilfully used by the Free Staters to arouse widespread sympathy for the victims and aversion for what appeared on the face of it to be a shocking and revolting crime which nothing could palliate and no usage of war excuse.

Now, what were the facts - known, indeed, to the military authorities, but not disclosed at the inquest for reasons that will soon be obvious to the reader? Briefly, the facts were as follows: As we have had occasion to mention already, many officers and men of the Free State army had become disillusioned and, recognising at last that they were, indeed, waging war against that Republic they had sworn to defend, they, in some cases went over openly to the Republican side, while in other cases they contented themselves

with giving secret aid to the Republicans while remaining themselves in the Free State army - trying to make the best of both worlds, possibly. Amongst the former class of officers was Ned Somers whose death at Castleblake we have already recorded. Amongst the latter class were many, indeed whose names cannot be disclosed here. To this latter category Lieutenant James Kennedy and Lieutenant George Cruise would appear to have at one time belonged.

Early in December, 1922, these two men made contact with Brigade H.Q. through the local (Clonmel) Intelligence Officer, James White, and it is fairly certain that one or other of the two officers had a personal interview with Brigadier Dinny Lacy also. It was no unusual thing at that period for Free State officers to supply information to the I.R.A. and such information was, as a matter of fact, regularly supplied to I.R.A. Intelligence by certain officers holding high rank in the enemy forces in South Tipperary. Already arrangements were being made for the handing over of certain military posts by the 'Officers Commanding, so that Dinny Lacy was in no way surprised when it was proposed to him that the Free State H.Q. in Clonmel should be handed up to the I.R.A. by sympathisers - of whom there were not a few - in the garrison. Kennedy and Cruise were the leading men in this proposed plan of action. One of them was to lead in the I.R.A. columns while the other was to open the gates of Emmet Barracks (now St. Patrick's) at a given signal. What was to happen after that was left to the discretion of the attackers.

Everything having been settled to the Brigadier's satisfaction, arrangements were made for bringing off the most sensational coup, as the Republicans thought, of the war by the capture of the Free State H.Q. with its entire

garrison in the important town of Clonmel which at that time was Headquarters not only for South Tipperary but for the entire Waterford Command. It has been stated that the columns were actually converging on Clonmel when word was received through Intelligence sources in the Clonmel garrison that the plot to take the barracks had been hatched with the full knowledge and approval of the military authorities in Clonmel with the purpose of entrapping and annihilating the fighting units of the 3rd Tipperary Brigade.

Warned in time, Brigadier Lacy acted cautiously, and when proofs of the treachery of Lieutenants Kennedy and Cruise had been obtained the arrangements made to enter the barracks were allowed to lapse but the men were not informed that their treachery was known to the brigade authorities.

On January 22nd, 1923, James White, the officer through whom the two lieutenants had first made contact with the brigade authorities, was arrested quietly by Free State troops and charged with "complicity in the Irregular campaign, especially as Intelligence Officer for Clonmel". The officer making this arrest spoke too freely being, as it is supposed, somewhat under the influence of drink, and was heard by a barmaid to gloat over the coming "liquidation" of the 3rd Tipperary Brigade. The barmaid, who was a member of Cumann na mBan, lost no time in conveying a warning to the Brigade Staff. Her story served but to confirm what had already been intimated to Brigade Headquarters by Intelligence men in the enemy camp, and the arrest of Lieutenants Kennedy and Cruise was decided upon.

On the day following the arrest of James White, Lieutenants Kennedy and Cruise left Clonmel for Templemore in a motor-car, wearing civilian clothes. Near New Inn they encountered the I.R.A. columns and were arrested. Not being aware of the fact that the whole plot was known to the Republicans they were not in the least discomfited at falling into the hands of the I.R.A., whom they expected would regard them as friends and allies. They had a very rude awakening when they found themselves under arrest and were absolutely dumbfounded when they discovered that their treachery was known to their captors.

The rest of the story is soon told. They were courtmartialled, found guilty and sentenced to death, which sentence was duly carried out in the usual manner, no machine-guns being used. They had a fair trial and were given every opportunity of clearing themselves, but of their guilt there could be no doubt whatsoever. Everything possible was done to make their last hours easier, and spiritual aid was procured for both men before they faced the firing squad. It will always be a moot point, perhaps, as to whether the two men originally acted in good faith towards the Republicans, really intending to betray the barracks to the brigade, but later on, changed their minds and informed their superior officers who thereupon allowed the plan to go through, turning what had been intended for their own destruction into an instrument which was to be used to bring about the total destruction of the Republican army in South Tipperary. This may well have been the case. On the other hand, it is quite possible that the whole plot was organised by the Free State military authorities from the beginning, or, at least, was organised with their knowledge and approval for the purpose of bringing about the destruction of the 3rd Tipperary Brigade and that the negotiations with

the brigade authorities were part and parcel of the plan. That is a matter which in the absence of information from the other side we shall possibly never know. Of one thing, however, there can be no doubt: Lieutenants Kennedy and Cruise attempted to trap the Republican leaders and in so doing did not hesitate to play a treacherous game. Their treachery was discovered and, according to all the recognised rules of war, they paid the extreme penalty.

These are the simple facts relating to the deaths of Lieutenant James Kennedy and Lieutenant George Cruise, and we hope that this account, which we have taken the greatest pains to verify, will put an end, once and for all, to the canard propagated for political purposes during the Civil War, that the two young men in question were foully and brutally done to death with machine-guns by the I.R.A.

Captain Jerry Lyons, Adjutant of the 1st (Rosegreen) Battalion who had been a prisoner in Clonmel since St. Patrick's Day, was shot dead by a Free State officer in Kickham Barracks, Clonmel, on the same evening that the bodies of Lieutenants Kennedy and Cruise were discovered. It has always been believed by those who served in the Republican forces during the Civil War that Jerry Lyons was murdered out of hand, and that the murder was a direct result of the Kennedy and Cruise affair, whether by way of reprisal for the shooting of the two officers whose dead bodies had been brought in that day, or because of a supposed connection between Adjutant Lyons and the two men. According to the Free State account, as given at the inquest, the prisoner was accidentally shot by an officer who was interrogating him in connection with the death of a certain Sergeant McGrath of the Free State army.

Sergeant McGrath, who was attached to the Waterford garrison and had been stationed at Mullinavat, was on leave and had been making his way, as it was said, to Templemore, his native place. He was wearing civilian clothes. On the morning of Saturday, March 3rd, his dead body was found by the roadside at Knockeevan near Clerihan. There were six bullet wounds in the body and head while pinned to his coat was a label with the words: "Convicted spy. Spies beware. By order I.R.A."

The Free State army authorities denied later (at the inquest) that the sergeant was a spy or that he was a Secret Service agent or in any way connected with the Intelligence Branch of the Free State army. Evidence was adduced to show that McGrath had been tried or courtmartialled at Knockeevan House and that the Rev. Fr. Dunworth, P.P., Clerihan, had been sent for to hear his confession and give him the Last Sacraments.

The Free State authorities stressed the fact that McGrath was not attached in any way to the Intelligence Branch of their army. Of course a man can be a spy without being in any army at all, and Thomas McGrath was definitely a spy, if not in an official capacity, then on his own initiative. This was not his first offence. Four months previously he had been arrested under similar circumstances, when he had been going about enquiring from farmers the whereabouts of I.R.A. columns. On that occasion he was tried and, being found guilty, was sentenced to death; but the sentence was commuted on condition that he would never engage in spying activities again. It may be of interest to note that on the former as on the latter occasion, he was in civilian dress. He had been treated with

great leniency, indeed, in being allowed to go free after conviction as a spy, but this leniency seems to have had the effect of persuading him that he could act likewise on a second occasion with equal impunity. He tried once more, was again caught and this time there was no appeal from the judgment: the sentence of death was carried out.

Captain Jerry Lyons was Adjutant of the Battalion area in which Thomas McGrath met his death, and, according to the Free State account, was being interrogated regarding the death of Sergeant McGrath when he was accidentally shot. The question put to Lyons was, it is stated, who was responsible for McGrath's death?

The Free State witnesses alleged that Lyons refused to answer any more questions, became savage, and grabbed at the revolver of the officer who was interrogating him. It was admitted that the interrogating officer held a drawn revolver in his hand pointed at the prisoner during the interrogation. The jury in returning a verdict that "death was caused by a revolver bullet from the revolver of an interrogating officer, which, according to the evidence, was accidentally discharged" added that "the jury strongly condemns the system of presenting arms at prisoners during interrogation".

In conclusion it may be added that many ugly rumours were going around concerning the cause and the manner of Jerry Lyons's death, and it is no exaggeration to say that very few Republicans at the time accepted the Free State evidence at its face value. The Free State story was the only story told at the inquest. The only witnesses were the very men who had been interrogating the prisoner. There was no one to contradict what was said or to challenge the story. Most Republicans at that time believed,

whether rightly or wrongly, that Adjutant Jerry Lyons had been deliberately murdered. It was also alleged that he had been very badly beaten before being shot. As there were no actual witnesses of the tragedy except the officers making the interrogation, we are unable to adduce any independent evidence which would prove beyond all doubt whether Jerry Lyons was murdered as the Republicans say, or killed accidentally as their opponents maintain.

Far be it from us to suggest that Jerry Lyons was murdered and not, as the jury said, accidentally shot. We simply set down the facts as recorded at the time and give the comments made thereon by the various parties concerned. It will be noticed that these events were judged and interpreted in very different ways by different people, the interpretation being generally in accordance with the particular political views of the person or persons passing judgment on such events. This, though much to be regretted, is not greatly to be wondered at, considering the excited state of the country and the sharp cleavage in public opinion during the period of which we are now treating. Hence the difficulty, in the absence of any positive evidence, of placing the responsibility where it belongs in cases like that discussed above.

Following the order to suspend all offensive action the position of the remnants of the columns and Active Service Units still in existence became extremely difficult. It is true that the Army Order declared that, while remaining on the defensive, all units should take adequate measures to protect themselves and their munitions; but considering the state to which the army had by this time been reduced the carrying out of this provision of the order was clearly impracticable if not actually impossible in many cases.

President de Valera had been negotiating with President Cosgrave through Senator Andrew Jameson and Senator James Douglas who had obtained permission from the Free State Government to act as intermediaries. The negotiations eventually broke down as the Free State Government insisted on the surrender of arms and on the obligation of taking the oath of allegiance to the English King. While the Republicans were not prepared to surrender their arms they were willing that effective control of such arms should be secured, pending the forthcoming general election, on lines such as were proposed by the Archbishop of Cashel, and proposed that after the election those arms should be disposed of either by re-issue to their then holders, or in such other manner as might secure the consent of the Government then elected.

The Republican proposals being rejected, nothing remained but to bring the war to a conclusion on another basis. This was done by a joint decision of the Republican Cabinet and Army Council, and the "Cease Fire" Order was issued on May 24th together with an instruction to "dump arms". This brought the Civil War formally to a close. Some such order was needed, as the order to suspend all offensive action had kept Republican columns continually on the run in order to avoid coming into armed conflict with the enemy who had taken advantage of the defenceless state of the Republicans to carry on large-scale operations without opposition throughout the length and breadth of Ireland, resulting in hundreds of arrests weekly.

We have now reached the end of our narrative. We have traced the story of the 3rd Tipperary Brigade from its first beginnings in 1918 through the hectic days of the Black and Tan campaign and later through the sad period of

internecine warfare down to the "Cease Fire" Order. The story of the brigade did not end there. After the sufferings of the battlefield came the sufferings of the prison camp and the jail. We have not attempted to carry the story beyond the armed struggle in these pages.

We hope that this first attempt at recording the story of the 3rd Tipperary Brigade from the year 1918 to the end of the Civil War in 1923, will move some competent historian to undertake the task which still remains to be done, namely, to write in full the military history of the brigade, bringing all its activities under review systematically and critically, and relating them to the general history of the period - a task for which the present writer frankly confesses himself to be utterly unfitted. Such a task, however, must be undertaken at some future time for the encouragement as well as for the instruction of a new generation. For the struggle of centuries is not yet over. An alien army of occupation still remains on Irish soil, and Irish freedom and sovereignty have still to be achieved.

To conclude, may we not repeat the words addressed by the President to the soldiers of the Republic on the occasion of the "Cease Fire" order:

"Soldiers of the Republic, Legion of the Rearguard..... Your efforts and the sacrifices of your dead comrades in this forlorn hope will surely bear fruit.....

You have saved the nation's honour,
preserved the national tradition, and kept
open the road to independence. You have
demonstrated in a way there is no mistaking
that we are not a nation of willing
bondslaves.....

May God guard every one of you and
give to our country in all times of need
sons who will love her as dearly and
devotedly as you".

Signed:

Dan Breen

Date:

13th February 1959

Witness:

Sean Brennan Lieut-Col.

(Investigator).

