

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 1489

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1489.

Witness

Patrick Dunlevy,  
Barbersfort House,  
Ballyglunin,  
Co. Galway.

Identity.

Quartermaster, Tuam Battalion, 1917.

Captain, Dunmore Company, 1918.

O/C, Claremorris Battalion, 1919-1920.

O/C, North Galway Brigade, Jan. 1921-Truce.  
Subject.

I.R.B., Fianna Eireann, Irish Volunteers and

I.R.A. activities, North Galway, 1912-Truce.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil.

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STATEMENT BY PATRICK DUNLEAVY,  
Barbersfort House, Ballyglunin, Co. Galway.

O/C, North Galway Brigade.

I was initiated a member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood some time in 1912. There was then a very small circle in Tuam. John P. Connolly (decd.) swore me in. Later, I joined Fianna Eireann under Liam Langley, Tuam.

The late Liam Mellows and Archie Heron of Belfast were constant week-end visitors to Langley's house and James Roache's house at Cloontroa Road, Tuam. After some time, we got uniforms and wooden guns, and used to train under Liam Mellows and Liam Langley at a place called Malachy's Plain.

Some time in 1914, there was a Volunteer company formed in Tuam, and some of the older members of Fianna Eireann became officers in that company. They used to parade and drill publicly at Parkmore under ~~an~~ ex Irish Guardsman named Shaughnessy, and Philips, and were known as Redmond's Volunteers. Later on, there was a split in the ranks of the Volunteers, and they formed into two groups, known as Redmond Volunteers and MacNeill Volunteers. Some of the Redmond Volunteers joined the British army during the 1914-1918 war.

The MacNeill Volunteers remained faithful to the Republican cause, but the organisation seemed to fall

through for a time. D.O.R.A. was then beginning to show her head, and public drilling, etc., began to drift. The I.R.B. circle still remained strong in organisation, and numbers had increased somewhat. Then came the rebellion in 1916, and it was only the members of the I.R.B. that were aware of anything that was going to happen in Tuam area.

There was a general mobilisation of North Galway circle, I.R.B., on Easter Sunday night. Tuam circle met at Connolly's forge, Galway Road, but there was some confusion over orders, and we were all demobilised without anything happening. We were again mobilised at Connolly's forge on Easter Monday night, and we were to disarm a police patrol that was guarding Mrs. Flatters of Ardicing, Tuam, but, as reports from Dublin were conflicting, this was called off. Again, there was a general mobilisation of North Galway circle for Easter Tuesday night. The mobilisation centre was Tuam fair green. Tuam circle again met at Connolly's forge with all arms that were available.

Arrangements had been made to have a train waiting outside Tuam station to convey all men to Moyode Castle, Athenry. Sam Brown of Tuam had the train waiting. Arrangements were also made for confessions at Tuam presbytery from the late Fr. John Heneghan, R.I.P. (Killed by Japs.)

Joseph Cummins and myself were detailed to go to Ballymoate road, Tuam, after confession, and wait there to meet a contingent from Mountbellew. Our instructions were to wait there until the town clock struck one, and, if the contingent had not arrived at that time, to return to mobilisation centre at Fair green.

The contingent from Mountbellew, under James Haverty, did not turn up and, when the clock had struck one, Cummins and I were returning to Fair Green as instructed, but a river at Bishop Street was in flood and we could not cross same. We came by another route, but walked into an ambush of R.I.C. who were concealed behind railings at cottages in Bishop Street, and before we realised, we were covered with rifles and ordered, "Hands up". Cummins had a revolver which, unfortunately, was in his haversack. There were fifteen or twenty policemen there, and we were both taken prisoner and brought to the R.I.C. barrack at Tuam where we were searched and questioned, etc.

There were five other men captured on the same road previously, namely, Tom Kilgarriff, Michael Ronayne, Willie McGill (all of Dunmore), and John Conway and James Ryan of Claremorris. Neither Conway nor Ryan was connected with the I.R.B., but both of them were subsequently interned. (All these men, including Joe Cummins, are now dead - R.I.P.) We met all these prisoners next morning at breakfast in the R.I.C. barracks at Tuam, and learned for the first time of their capture on the previous night.

Next day, all seven of us were taken to Galway via Headford, as the R.I.C. feared being ambushed if we were taken by direct route. We were then brought to Eglinton barracks at Galway and, late that night or early next morning, we were taken to the docks at Galway and four of the prisoner were put on to a tender and rowed away in the darkness. The three of us remaining were told by our escort of R.I.C. that these men were being taken out to sea to be drowned. After

some time, the tender returned minus the prisoners, and Cummins, Ryan and I were put on to it - to meet the same fate, as we thought. After some time at sea, our handcuffs were removed, and I thought that they were at least giving us a chance to swim, but, to our surprise, we found ourselves beside a large vessel of the English navy. We were thrown a rope ladder, and climbed on to the deck where we again met our companions. After again being searched, we were taken to a storeroom at the bottom of the ship where we met several other prisoners, including George Nicholls, solicitor, Galway, Frank Hardiman, Tom Flanagan, Pádraig Ó Máille, John Faller, Dr. Walshe, Professor Steinberger (German lecturer in University College, Galway), Con O'Leary (later Dr. O'Leary), Micheál Ó Droinneán, Jack O'Reilly and George Carter. We slept on the floor (metal), with a large gun-cover under and over us. We slept heads and points, to keep each other warm and to conserve space. We subsequently learned that the vessel was a cruiser, named H.M.S. Gloucester, and for some days she cruised around the Irish coast.

After some days, we were transferred from this cruiser on to a mine sweeper, named H.M.S. Snowdrop. Our living quarters in this vessel were still more limited. We were again on the move along the Irish coast for some days until eventually we arrived at Cobh where we were transferred on to a battleship named H.M.S. Albion. The Albion was stationary at Cobh, as she seemed to be undergoing repairs. Our living quarters on the battleship were more spacious, but we were never allowed on deck. We were at Cobh for about three weeks and were rather enjoying ourselves, as we were stationary and no one was seasick. Late again

one night, we were taken off H.M.S. Albion and transferred to a scout vessel called H.M.S. Adventurer. We had a frightfully rough night at sea, and we met two other prisoners named Peter Howley and -- Conroy, on this vessel.

Next morning, we were landed at Dúnlaoghaire, taken by lorry to the police station in Dúnlaoghaire, and compelled to stand in an open yard under torrential rain until, after some hours, a military escort arrived and took us by open lorry to the square at Richmond barracks where we again had to stand for hours in the rain, before we were taken to a room in Richmond barracks. I might add that, during our time at sea, our food consisted of bully beef and dog biscuits, that we had no change of clothes and that, by this time, we were all verminous.

The room we were taken to at Richmond barracks was quite empty - no furniture or blankets - and as we were all soaking wet, we could not rest or sleep until our clothes had dried out. We got no food until next morning, and some of the older prisoners were very sick.

There were several hundred prisoners in Richmond barracks at this time and, after some days, men were being singled out for deportation. I was moved around to several rooms in Richmond barracks, and I was eventually taken to the square in the barracks for deportation, but I failed to understand or answer my name when called, and a British officer told me afterwards - with a kick - to get back to L. block.

While a prisoner at Richmond, I met such men as Dick Fitzgerald, Terence MacSwiney, Austin Stack, and my

best pal for a time was the late Noel Lemass who was wounded and in Fianna Eireann uniform, R.I.P.

During my time in Richmond barracks, I was there when Mr. Asquith, then Prime Minister of England, visited the barracks and went to several rooms and talked to and questioned prisoners. His usual questions were, "What is your name?" "Where are you from?" and "Why were you arrested?" After his visit, we were given better food and more blankets. I was subsequently released from Richmond barracks.

In 1917 a battalion was organised in Tuam. John P. Connolly (decd.) was appointed O/C. John J. Waldron, Central Stores, Tuam, was adjutant, and I was appointed quartermaster. All County Galway was then one brigade under Seamus Murphy, with Mattie Niland of Galway as adjutant, and the late Sean Broderick, quartermaster.

Later in 1917, I went to work in Dunmore, and had to resign my appointment as quartermaster, Tuam battalion.

There was then a very strong circle of the I.R.B. in Dunmore. The late Thomas Kilgarriff was centre. He subsequently became centre for North Galway.

After some time in Dunmore, we formed a Volunteer company of which I became captain. The late Michael Ronayne was quartermaster, and Willie McGill, adjutant. Ronayne and McGill were internees from Frongoch. There was very little Volunteer activity during 1917 excepting drillings, training in engineering, etc.

In 1918, the I.R.B. and Volunteers took an active part, with Sinn Féin Club, in the election campaign, and

organised a house-to-house canvas in the whole area for Dr. Brian Cusack who was the Sinn Féin candidate and who was elected M.P. for North Galway. Dr. Cusack was then in gaol and was a native of Co. Clare. The Volunteers also enforced the boycott of Belfast goods, and later assisted in establishing and enforcing decisions of Sinn Féin arbitration courts.

I was appointed to take charge of Volunteers in North Galway by Brigadier Seamus Murphy during elections in 1918, with headquarters at Tuam. A party of Volunteers were on duty at each polling station, and this party escorted the ballot boxes to receiving centre at Tuam courthouse where a specially selected party of Volunteers remained on duty with R.I.C. all night, to ensure that nothing happened to ballot boxes until the counting of votes next day. These activities naturally brought some of our officers and men into disrepute with the R.I.C.

In 1919, I went to work in Claremorris and, after some time in Claremorris, I was appointed O/C of that battalion. I still kept contact with my old fellow I.R.B. men and Volunteers in North Galway, and I used to visit the area very often, as things were much more active at that time in the Tuam area. Sometime in 1919 or early in 1920, there was a meeting of Connaught I.R.B. men held at Gray's Hotel, Tuam, and I was elected secretary for Connaught. The late Larry Lardner of Athenry arranged this meeting. During the early part of 1919, I travelled by bicycle on several Sundays with Larry Lardner to various circles in Galway and Mayo, inspecting and organising I.R.B. circles.



At Easter 1920, I took part with Seamus Maloney, the late Dr. Paddy Mullins and Sean Lohan (killed during the Civil War) in the destruction of Income Tax papers at Kirwan's, Dalgan House, Miltown, Tuam - as I happened to be home for Easter on holidays and met the Tuam battalion officers at Tuam on Easter Saturday night. The Tuam battalion also burned evacuated Barnaderg R.I.C. barracks, Castlegrove and Castlehackett, and an evacuated police hut at Abbeyknockmoy on the same night.

I had made arrangements for the destruction of income tax papers at Claremorris on the same night, before I left cycling for Tuam. This operation was not carried out in my absence at Claremorris, and, after returning to Claremorris after the Easter holidays, I had to carry out this job at great personal risk, as the excise office was only a few doors away from the R.I.C. barracks. After holding up the excise officer - Mr. John Donoghue, by arrangement - and getting keys, we had to have a covering party beside the R.I.C. barracks during the operation.

In July 1920, a party of six R.I.C. from Claremorris went to Westport for duty at Croagh Patrick (Reek Sunday). The late Harry Burke, battalion adjutant, Claremorris, Fr. Tom Burke and myself went to Westport and succeeded in finding out that this party of R.I.C. were again returning to Claremorris the same night. We decided to ambush this party on their return journey between Claremorris and Balla. This party of R.I.C. returned by a different route and we missed them.

Early in the month of August 1920, I arranged with Tom Maguire of Cross, Cong (later O/C, 2nd Western Division), to enter Cross R.I.C. barracks in British

military uniforms for the purpose of capturing the barracks and equipment.

Harry Burke (deceased), Willie Kenny, now living at Kiltimagh, Co. Mayo, Willie Hearey, Claremorris, and myself went to Cross on a Sunday morning, dressed in British military uniforms, and we met Michael O'Brien, adjutant, South Mayo brigade, and later killed at Tourmakeady. O'Brien told us of the arrangements for the operation, and O'Brien then went home across the fields. Our instructions were to pull up the car outside the barracks, and to try and enter same - and that there would be a party of men on the opposite side of the road to rush the barracks as soon as the door was opened.

We waited for some time outside the barracks, and eventually Kenny (who was driving the car) and I got out of the car and went to the barrack door for water for the radiator - and all this time, there was no move from the men on the opposite side of the road. Then, as the congregation were coming from Mass in the church nearby, Burke, who was in officer's uniform, told us we must move off, which we did. There was also an arrangement for men to meet us in a wood between Cross and Shrule, to take over our uniforms and captured equipment, but there were no men there, and we had to drive through Shrule, Headford, to a place called Sylane, near Tuam, before we could divest ourselves of military uniforms and get into our own clothes. I subsequently learned that all arrangements miscarried, and that there were no Volunteers at either the wood or road near the R.I.C. barracks. Tom Maguire himself was at Mass in the church nearby during this operation.

Shortly after this, R.I.C. and Black and Tans, masked, raided for me at Begley's of Claremorris where I worked as manager of a branch house. Fortunately for me, I was not in bed when this raid took place. Previous to this, I had received a "death" notice which I still hold. I then went on the run, and remained in Mayo area for some time but, as it was impossible to organise any operation of a military nature, I reported to G.H.Q. and to the I.R.B. in Dublin.

After consultation with the late Sean Ó Murthuile, I.R.B., the Adjutant General, the late Gearoid O'Sullivan, the D.I., the late General Collins, and the Director of Organisation - I think it was Diarmuid O'Hegarty - I was instructed to return to Tuam area and reorganise the brigade, which I did, and on the arrest of Brigade O/C Con Fogarty, I was appointed O/C of the brigade in December 1920 or early January 1921. I had then established contact with G.H.Q., and I was instructed to get rid of any officers who were inactive and to organise battalions and companies.

I was also instructed by G.H.Q. to enquire about six rifles, six revolvers, twenty-four hand grenades, three hundred rounds of .303, and three hundred rounds of .45 revolver ammunition that had been consigned to a fictitious name in Headford as a box of hardware for the late Commandant Louis Darcy. I found that this precious box was still lying at Tuam station from the May previous, and I took possession of same, as instructed by G.H.Q.

In the Tuam brigade area, particularly in No. 1 (Tuam) battalion, the organisation had deteriorated

very much after Battalion Commandant Michael Moran was killed by the enemy. There was a lot of desertions by battalion and company officers, and there was only one officer - my late brother, Tom, who was then quartermaster. The same applied to the brigade staff, as there was only Patrick Conway, brigade quartermaster.

After my appointment by G.H.Q. as brigade commandant, I appointed Thomas Tormey, now in the U.S.A., as brigade adjutant, Patrick Conway as brigade quartermaster, Tom Kilgarriff (deceased) as brigade intelligence officer, M.J. Ryan as brigade engineer, and Tom Concannon as brigade chief of police.

I appointed Thomas Dunleavy (deceased) as O/C, Tuam battalion, Peter McHugh (deceased) as Vice O/C, Thomas Ryan as battalion quartermaster, James Burke as intelligence officer, Stephen Keane (deceased) as battalion police officer, and Sean O'Neill as adjutant. (I subsequently found O'Neill unsatisfactory and appointed Thomas Nohilly as adjutant in March 1921.) See attached appendix for Glenamaddy battalion and company officer, and also for officer of companies of the Tuam battalion.

I formed a flying column early in January 1921. This column was mostly made up of officers and men who were on the run and were staying in hiding indifferent places throughout the area in both Tuam and Glenamaddy battalions.

Our first job was to locate rifles and ammunition that had been concealed in dumps by men who had deserted and gone to England. Most of this ammunition was afterwards found to be bad.

After locating the concealed rifles and ammunition plus rifles taken from Tuam station, our first attempt at an ambush was at a place called Gortaleam on the Dunmore-Williamstown road. I had arranged with all battalion and company officers for detailed weekly reports of enemy movements in their respective areas, and we found that police from Dunmore usually travelled to Ballymore via Williamstown between the third and fifth day of each month. As this whole area is very flat, we had decided that this was the best position for an ambush, as the national school was near this position. We had to place a guard on the school in order that our presence would not become known.

We occupied positions on both sides of the road at dawn. As no enemy came along before 5 p.m., we had to call off the guard from the school and withdraw, as the parents would become uneasy when their children had not returned home. We afterwards occupied different positions on this road - away from the school.

We occupied positions on the Ruan-Dunmore road. We had found, from reports, that three lorries usually travelled on Saturday or Wednesday along this road. We had to evacuate two families to occupy this position, Flaherty's and Piggott's, but had to withdraw after one day.

We occupied a position at Dalgan, Miltown, on the main Dunmore-Miltown road, but had to evacuate this position early in the day as we had to hold up too many people who were on their way to Mass. Shortly after withdrawing from this position, three lorries of R.I.C. and Tans passed, going to Miltown from Dunmore, and we were regretting evacuation and missing ambush. Three

large lorries of British military came from Irishtown to Milltown along a bye road which was linked up with the position we had just left. Had we remained in our original position, these lorries would have come up on our rear, as there is a network of roads in this locality.

We attempted an ambush at Laught (Moylough) as we had information that a party of R.I.C. and Tans used come from Mountbellew to this public house, usually on a Sunday. After remaining there all day, nothing happened. We occupied this position twice.

We occupied a position at Knockroe, Abbeyknockmoy, to intercept a patrol of R.I.C. and Tans that used come from Monivea to Abbeyknockmoy. We stayed in this position for a whole week, and had to leave same as too many people knew of our presence. There was only a small section of the flying column in this position.

We occupied an ambush position at Lisavalley between Derreen and Barnaderg, but again without result.

We occupied again a position on the Tuam-Dunmore road. The whole A.S.U. was there, reinforced with local companies of Dunmore, Cortoon and Clonberne - again without result.

We occupied a position at Kenmoy Ballyglunin. I had first arranged for destruction of Belfast goods at Ballyglunin station and had asked the stationmaster, a Mr. Hogan (deceased), who was friendly to report same to R.I.C. at Turloughmore, so that they might come to investigate. Unfortunately, the consignee, a Mr. Costelloe, came to the station to deliver goods - potatoes from Belfast which we had dumped into nearby river. Costelloe returned to Tuam, and reported to

the R.I.C. and military who later came along in five lorries and rounded up civilians from bogs and houses to collect the potatoes from the river. Whilst all this was happening, we were lying in ambush for the Turloughmore police in a wood beside the railway station. A patrol of eight R.I.C. did come from Turloughmore, but I had to withhold fire, as there were about a hundred R.I.C. men, Tans and military just outside the demesne wall. When it came to evening, the lorries returned to Tuam. The patrol from Turloughmore returned home by an alternative route, and we missed getting them. I might add that, only for the efficiency of our outposts and scouts, we would have been surrounded on this occasion as, if we had attacked the patrol from Turloughmore, our position would have been hopeless.

We again occupied a position on the Tuam-Dunmore road at a place called Sylane, and, in the early hours of the morning, I got a despatch to proceed immediately to Quigley's house at Croswell in County Roscommon to arrange an operation at Dunamon railway station with an officer from G.H.Q. His name was McMahon, I think. I was also instructed to detail the best rifle and revolver men in the brigade area to proceed to Galway-Roscommon border and await instructions there. There was also a despatch to be delivered to the O/C of the South Mayo brigade (Tom Maguire).

I sent on this despatch to Mayo, and withdrew the men from the position near the road. I brought them to a village called Carrarea, Brownsgrrove, and placed Brigade Adjutant Thomas Tormey and Quartermaster Patrick Conway in charge. The position was three hundred yards from the road. I allowed the shotgun

men to return home. I left instructions for the riflemen to snipe any lorries or enemy that might pass along the road and move towards Ballymoe that night, which they did. Three lorries of R.I.C. and Tans from Tuam came along, and were sniped. Whilst sniping was in progress, four lorries of R.I.C. and Tans came in the opposite direction from Dunmore. They dismounted, got in across fields and nearly had our unit surrounded, when they retired towards Lavally after exchange of fire and dusk came on. District Inspector O'Callaghan from Tuam was wounded in this operation.

Battalion Commandant James Maloney and I went to Roscommon and met the officer from G.H.Q. who was specially sent by Director of Intelligence, General Michael Collins, to arrange to intercept a convoy of rifles, ammunition and other equipment that was being sent from Athlone to Claremorris. The plan was to attack the convoy at Dunamon railway station. This was on a Saturday, and the convoy was to pass on the following Monday.

Although we were actually in the brigade adjutant's house - Quigley's, as far as I can remember - and the despatch had been addressed early on Saturday to South Mayo, neither the South Roscommon nor the South Mayo units turned up, and the officer from G.H.Q. called off this operation on Monday morning. Maloney and I asked him to attempt the operation with our brigade A.S.U., but he refused. I hope that this officer from G.H.Q. (Sean McMahon) is still alive and can verify. It was not Sean McMahon who was then Q.M.G. We placed scouts at the railway station, and we found that the convoy did pass on Monday - only one N.C.O. and seventeen soldiers.



We again lay in ambush at a place called Kilnalagg, Polredmond, on the Dunmore-Williamstown road, and occupied this position for two nights and three days. During this occupation, an aeroplane came over us, flying very low, but I assumed that it was only scouting the road for some important enemy officer who might be coming along. Otherwise, we could easily have brought it down. Unfortunately, I was wrong in my assumption (which I will always regret).

Again we had to evacuate this position as too many people knew of our presence. Before we left this position, on the third evening, we got all the local people to cut and block these roads, and I told them to get away if they heard any shooting as I put a section on either side of them for their protection.

We moved on from there to a place called Park, near Clonberne, which was then the only road left open from Dunmore to Glenamaddy and Williamstown, but again without result.

There was agrarian trouble at a place called Forth Brown, and R.I.C. and Black and Tans had beaten up tenants, in a village named Ballinahown, who were causing trouble to a man named John Henry Burke, now residing in Co. Meath. I thought that it would be an ideal way to get the enemy to come out. So I arranged a good cattle drive off his land, and instructed the Volunteers from the local company, Cortoon and Cloonberne, to drive Burke's cattle and sheep on towards Moylough, and to return home when they had done so. This was done, and we lay in ambush at Freaney's Cross, Clonberne. We had a very good position here, on both side of the road.

I had trees cut almost through, and bound with a rope each to another tree, so that a Volunteer would only have to cut the rope when the enemy had passed through on either side, and the trees would fall immediately and hem them in, but again no enemy came along. This position was afterwards described by the enemy as a "veritable death trap."

During this operation, an ex British army officer named O'Rourke came along with his daughter and two servants on horseback. They rode into the position of some of our outposts and were held up. I offered to let this man go home if he pledged me his word of honour that he would not divulge our presence to the enemy, but he definitely said, "No", and said that he had told his wife, when leaving home, that he would be back for dinner. He also told me that, when he would not be back for dinner, his wife would go to Tuam and report his absence to the British authorities and that they would be out to investigate. I told him that this was the best news that I had heard for a long time, that there was only one authority, that we would let his friends know who that was when they came to look for him, and that we would have to hold him in order to bring them out. I admired this man's bravery, and think it fair that it should go on record.

One of his servants, Hannon, who had been already sentenced to death for espionage and who had got several chances to leave the district, was with O'Rourke. Unfortunately, Hannon had seen some of the men who were his neighbours, viz., Thomas Wilson, Michael Gannon, Thomas Ryan (deceased), Michael Cleary and some others who were not on the run at the time but who were reinforcing the

column for this operation. Otherwise, the brigade council might have given Hannon another chance to leave the country rather than carry out the death penalty. I told Hannon to make his peace with God, and took him away from the prisoners. I also told him that, if we had the opportunity, I would let him see a priest, which we did later that evening, and duly carried out the execution, and labelled the spy, "Convicted Spy. Executed by I.R.A. Others Beware!"

At this stage, the enemy were not moving out, except in large humbers, usually four to six lorries, in Tuam brigade area, as they had learned of all these prepared ambushes and were more than cautious. I reported this matter to G.H.Q. as I was in Dublin four or five times for conferences and asking or begging for some equipment, as the brigade quartermaster had handed over the rifles, revolvers, grenades and ammunition taken from Tuam railway station to Commandant Louis Darcy to be used in his area. I did not quite approve of this action by Quartermaster Conway, but it was done in my absence. I don't think that these rifles were ever used, as poor Louis Darcy was killed at Oranmore station, and afterwards there was a lot of equipment in this area surrendered to the enemy and piled up at Kilroe castle because of threats by Black and Tans to burn all the houses in the area if arms were not surrendered within a certain date.

I had got permission from G.H.Q. shortly before the Truce to operate outside the Tuam brigade area as I had pointed out that all our good and best positions were known to the enemy and they were either moving in too strong a force or not coming out at all.

The flying column were moved into Moylough area, as we had information that a party of Protestant Black and Tans used to come from Mountbellew to church in Moylough on Sundays. Usually four or five Catholic R.I.C. men came with them and did guard outside the church during service.

We billeted on a Friday night in a village called Shankhill in Mountbellew area, and moved into position between Mountbellew and Moylough at daybreak on Sunday morning. We had to occupy two houses and outhouse near the road, as our position was very exposed to view of people going to Mass. I placed a scout up in a holly bush on a hedge near the road. He had a clear view of the road leading from Mountbellew and could not be seen himself. I arranged a signal with him when he saw the enemy approaching as we could not occupy the position beside the roadway without being observed.

This scout, the late Captain Patrick McHugh, mistook a cloud of dust in the distance for a military lorry, and gave signal of approach. The A.S.U. rushed into position, only to find his mistake, and we had to go back again into the cover of the houses. In doing so, we met several people going to Mass and we had to detain them for safety as they were all strangers to the A.S.U.

Whilst this was happening, the enemy came along on bicycles - twelve in all - and cycling two deep, about two hundred yards between each file, and as there were only sixteen of us, it was impossible to hit them. We changed our position then, in order to deal with them on their return, but they returned by an alternative route via Laught and Springlawn.

We then moved on to the opposite side of the road, and remained in a position about one hundred and fifty yards from the main road. There was a high ridge behind this position, and fortunately I took the precaution of cutting holes through sod fences in case of having an engagement and having to retreat. This precaution was instrumental in saving us from casualties later on.

At about 7 p.m., one R.I.C. man and a little girl came along, cycling from Mountbellew to Moylough, and we let them pass on. Later, another R.I.C. man, named Neilan, passed, cycling from Mountbellew to Moylough. I sent four men from the column, viz., Captain Patrick Treacy, Captain Brian Conniffe, Captain Tim Feerick (deceased) and Battalion Quartermaster John Knight, into Moylough, armed with revolvers and a few bombs, and told them to shoot these two police and return by a different route, and to man their positions again, armed with rifles, for an engagement.

I expected that Mountbellew barracks would be notified immediately, as there were no wires or roads cut in the area. These men carried out my instructions, but only succeeded in wounding Neilan as he got away through a hedge. The other man escaped from a public house, although Conniffe and Knight fired several shots at him. These four men moved off in the Tuam direction and then returned, by a circuitous route, to the main body as instructed. They were just back in position when two lorries and a private car of R.I.C. and Tans came from Mountbellew to Moylough. They were travelling a good distance apart, and I decided to let them pass, on account of the distance between each vehicle, and rise on the ground at the Moylough side of our position.

After enemy had spent a good while in Moylough and had searched the country in the Tuam direction, they were returning to Mountbellew and travelling pretty close, when we opened fire on them. The leading driver was put out of action and the lorry pulled up, as did the private car and the next lorry, and they succeeded in getting cover in a drain on the opposite side of the road. The fighting lasted for about one and a half hours. We had a lot of defective ammunition, and I got five magazines of ammunition<sup>IN</sup><sub>A</sub> which ~~which~~ there were only a few good rounds. This was ammnnition that had been buried in a bog hole in 1920. I met a man, named Thomas Higgins, from Moylough who gave us some good ammunition that was in the Mountbellew battalion; otherwise we would never have got away from this position as we could not try a flanking movement. If we could have flanked the enemy from an elevation on the Moylough side, I have no doubt that we would have made a complete success of this operation. We had to wait on until dusk to get away, and then only in sections. We had to conserve our ammunition, and had only five rounds for each rifle left after the operation.

I do not know what the enemy casualties were, but I do know that there were at least five killed or wounded, as I subsequently met a man named Christopher O'Connor who was commandeered to drive the private car for the R.I.C. that evening, and he told me that, in addition to one wounded man in the car from Moylough, there were four other casualties, as far as ~~He~~ could see, but that the police hid them away from him.

During the months of May, June and July before the Truce in 1921, the enemy rarely moved out by day,

and then only in great strength. All their movements were mostly by night, and then often in cycle patrols which were always a great danger to the flying column.

We now decided to go into the towns occupied by the enemy in the brigade area - Tuam, which was occupied by about sixty Tans and R.I.C. and a company of military stationed in the courthouse and workhouse, beside the town, Milltown, occupied by about forty-eight Tans and R.I.C., Dunmore occupied by about sixty Tans and R.I.C., and Ballymore, by between thirty and forty Tans and R.I.C.

By this time, I had the column divided up into three sections - one section to cover Tuam and Dunmore, one section to cover Milltown, and one section to cover Ballymore. It was next to impossible to get into Tuam as the company there was not very active, and the best of our men were either arrested or on the run.

However, we did get into Tuam on two occasions, via Bishop Street and Shop Street, but all was quiet. I found from reports from our scouts after these entries that some undesirables must have seen us and conveyed the information to the enemy, as military, Tans and R.I.C. used to lie in ambush at night on the approaches to Tuam, and we had to abandon this plan for Tuam.

I was in charge of a section that went into the town of Dunmore on several occasions - five nights in succession one week. We used to go in at night and remain in position until daybreak, and then withdraw to a house owned by Michael Donnellan's mother. (Donnellan is now Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance.) We also learned that our movement here were discovered, and we had to give up the plan for a while.

It was one of these movements into the enemy positions that led to an ambush at Miltown in June 1921, in which an R.I.C. sergeant and a Tans were killed and three Tans wounded. My late brother, Tom Dunleavy, was in charge of this party. Vice Commandant Martin Ryan was in charge of the party that used to enter Ballymoe, but without result.

We had practically no ammunition left when the Truce was declared. I would say we had only about five rounds for each rifle, and a few rounds for each revolver.

The whole-time members of the flying column, as far as I remember, were:-

Patrick Dunleavy	John Knight.
Thomas Dunleavy	Peter Brennan.
Tim Dunleavy	Thomas Feerick.
Tom Farnley	Peter Burke.
Patrick Conway	Patrick Walshe
Jn. J. Ryan	John P. McCormack
Tom Kilgarriff	Dan McCormack
Thomas Mannion	Martin Slattery
Martin Mannion	Thomas Nohilly
James Maloney	Thomas Ryan
Martin Ryan	Willie Feeney
Patrick Treacy	Patrick McHugh
Brian Coniffe	

In addition to these military activities, the Tuam brigade had to carry out several other duties, such as enforcing of boycott on Belfast goods and enforcing the decisions of the Republican courts as long as the courts were functioning. These courts ceased to



function early in 1921 as judges were either arrested or had to go on the run. Con Kennedy (deceased), Michael Finnegan (deceased), Tom Kilgarriff (deceased), Mrs. E. Costello, Willie Dooly and Gabriel Guy (deceased) were members of the Republican courts. Gabriel Guy was later district justice in Ballina.

When these courts ceased to function, the brigade council took over administration, and amicably settled several disputes in order to prevent litigants going into the British courts.

The brigade council had also to arrange for finance for the general election in 1921, as all the political officers of Sinn Féin Comhairle Ceanntar were left the area, and money had to be found to lodge deposits for nomination of candidate. As far as I can remember, North Galway's share in financing deposits was £450, and we borrowed this amount from the late Dean (Canon) Macken of Dunmore.

We had to collect all this money throughout the area, and made a levy on each house, according to means. This amount was paid back to Dean Macken.

There was a snap dissolution of the British Parliament some time during hostilities in 1921, and the Sinn Féin candidates were returned unopposed.

There seemed to be more enemy activity in Tuam area than in the adjoining areas in Co. Galway, and the enemy burned my father's house and some other houses, including the home of the late Jeremiah Mee.

We burned the workhouse at Glenamaddy as we had information that it was about to be occupied by

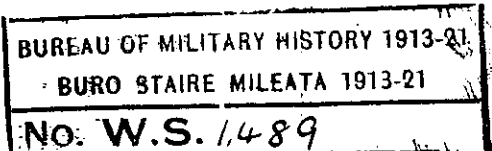
the military.

There were several large scale rounds-up in the area, including the surrounding of the whole of Glenamaddy, Williamstown and Ballymoe area by hundreds of Auxies, R.I.C., Tans and military from Claremorris, Galway, Boyle and Athlone, but luckily no member of the flying column was caught in the net.

SIGNED: *Pilgrimage & Summary Report*

DATE: *September 5<sup>th</sup> 1956*

WITNESS *Desmond Brennan, Lieut-col.*



APPENDIX.

Tuam Battalion - ten Companies:

Barnaderg - Tim Dunleavy.  
Tuam - Pat Geoghegan (deserted);  
subsequently Patrick Collieran.  
Sylane - Patrick McHugh.  
Corofin - Willie Feeney.  
Gardenfield - Martin Higgins.  
Miltown - Tom Feerick (deceased).  
Belmont - Thomas Hannon.  
Abbeyknockmoy - John Fleming (deceased).  
Kilconly - Frank Cunningham.  
Cortoon - Thomas Wilson.

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Glenamaddy Battalion - ten Companies:

Battalion O/C - James Mahoney.  
Battalion Vice O/C - Martin Ryan.  
Battalion Quartermaster - John Knight.  
Battalion Adjutant - Martin Mannion.  
Battalion Intelligence Officer - M.J. Walshe (deceased).

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Dunmore - Thomas Mannion.  
Kilterna - Roddy Rabbit.  
Polredmond - John Glennon.  
Williamstown - Paddy Noonan (deceased).  
Kilcroan - John Hanley.  
Glynn - Tom Burke.  
Kilbegnett - John McDonagh.  
Kilkerrin - Brian Conniffe.  
Glenamaddy - Pat Treacy.  
Clonberne - John Mahon.

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