

Local leaders' statements - only to May 1916

References here in the form WS 513 as on the militaryarchives.ie site, but the original documents are listed BMHWS 513. The pagination here is also different, but I have put the pages of the original in brackets through the text, e.g. [4] etc.

WS 513 Thomas Furlong

About 1908 I joined the I.R.B. in Wexford. I was sworn in by Seán T. O'Kelly. Amongst those present were Ned Foley, Watt Foley, Bob Brennan, John Barker, Seán Sinnott and myself. After being sworn in we elected Ned Foley as Centre. Meetings were held every month. The principal matters discussed at the meetings were the spreading of the organisation and the suitability of persons proposed for membership.

About 1909 I came to Kilkenny. Although there had been an I.R.B. Circle in Kilkenny it was now dormant. About 1912 Seán McDermott came to me with a letter of introduction from Ned Foley, I.R.B. Centre in Wexford. McDermott discussed with me the possibility of restarting the Kilkenny Circle. He asked me to get those I knew to come together and restart the circle. I knew that Peter de Loughrey was an old I.R.B. man and I sent McDermott to him. Subsequently De Loughrey called a meeting at which the following were present, Peter de Loughrey,[2] Pat Corcoran, Ned McSweeney, Tom Stallard, Tom Hennessy and myself. Seán McDermott spoke a few words. de Loughrey was elected Centre, and Pat Corcoran Deputy Centre. Meetings which were held frequently were concerned chiefly with the spreading of the organisation

At the formation of the Volunteers in 1913, we got instructions from Dublin to capture as many key positions as possible in the Volunteers. A public meeting for the purpose of starting the Volunteers was held at the Parade and was addressed by Roger Casement.

Some I.R.B. men, including de Loughrey, succeeded in getting on to the County Committee when the split occurred the vast majority went with Redmond; only sixteen remained loyal to the Executive, about half of whom were I.R.B. men. Gradually the strength increased until eventually we had three companies. I was a member of "B" Company. The officers of "B" Company were, Tom Tracy, Captain; Jimmie Lalor and Martin Cassidy, Lieutenants. We were visited frequently by Liam Mellows and J.J. O'Connell (Ginger). About the [3] spring of 1916, Eamon Kelly came as organiser. Late 1915, the firm for which I was working, got the contract for painting and decorating the offices and officers' quarters in Kilkenny Military Barracks. I was superintending the work. During the course of the job I sent word to the Barrack Sergeant that I wanted possession of the Commanding Officer's office for the purpose of painting, etc. While I was in the commanding Officer's office waiting for the Sergeant to come to hand it over to me, I made a hasty survey of it. I noticed a press which was unlocked. On opening the press I saw an envelope marked "secret". Inside it was another envelope marked "very secret"; inside it was another envelope on which the following was printed, 'this document must not be allowed into the hands of any person under the rank of Officer Commanding Barracks, or County Inspector of the R.I.C.'. I replaced the envelopes and put them back in the press, and then nailed the door. When the Sergeant arrived to hand over the office he tried to open the press, and thinking it was locked, told me to carry on with the work. At dinner time [4] I reported the matter to Pat Corcoran. He told me to bring out the Document at all costs, "even", he said, "if it is to cost you your life". I brought the envelopes out that evening and handed them to Pat Corcoran. He gave them to Ginger O'Connell, who happened to be in Kilkenny and staying at De Loughrey's. O'Connell copied the documents and gave the copies to Seán McDermott, who brought them to Dublin. Two days later I replaced the documents in the press. The documents included a secret code with instructions how to use it, and the key for deciphering it. O'Connell told me it was the most important thing; they had got it and that they had been trying to get it for a long time. I heard later that Volunteer Headquarters used the key and by means of it learned of the orders which had been issued for the arrest of Mellows.

I also brought out of Kilkenny Military Barracks a large quantity of maps. I put the maps in large distemper drums and covered them with dried distemper Thomas McDonagh sent word requesting me to get him a set of 4-inch maps covering an area from Leighlin Bridge [5] to the midlands. I succeeded in getting them and sent them on to him. I also took out "Confidential reports from the War Front", and gave them to Ginger O'Connell who had asked me to get them for him.

During Holy Week, 1916, orders were issued to the Volunteers to parade on Easter Sunday with arms and full equipment, which included 24 hours' rations and field dressings. On Holy Saturday I went to Wexford with Peter de Loughrey, Jimmie Lalor and Pat Corcoran and brought back a quantity of gelignite. We mobilised on Easter Sunday as ordered, and were under arms all day. We were dismissed between 6 and 7 o'clock that evening when Pat Corcoran arrived back from Dublin with word that the Rising was off, we mobilised again on Easter Monday and remained under arms waiting instructions until Wednesday evening, when we were disbanded on orders from O'Connell.

The plans, as far as I know, were that the Kilkenny Volunteers were to go via the Scollop Gap and link up with the Wexford Volunteers. [6]

I was arrested about the middle of the following week and brought to Kilkenny Gaol. The following morning I was brought by rail to Richmond Barracks, Dublin. After about a week I was sent to Wakefield prison. I was released early in June 1916.

WS 590 Tom Treacy

On the 5th March, 1914, a meeting was held in the City Hall, Kilkenny, at which Sir Roger Casement and Thomas McDonagh (who were executed by the British in 1916) attended, and they were the principal speakers. The meeting was held for the purpose of starting the Volunteer Movement in Kilkenny. The speakers were very enthusiastically received and a large number of young men handed in their names to join the writer being one of that number. At this time this organisation was called "The Irish National Volunteers" and in Kilkenny, when it was organised somewhat, it was controlled and directed by a Committee which was composed partly by supporters of John Redmond's Party and the Ancient Order of Hibernians, and members of the Irish Republican Brotherhood and Sinn Féin. The writer was not a member of any of these organisations or a member of the controlling or governing committee; therefore, I know very little about its actual working, but it is necessary to mention it to show the pattern of things at that time; and, as far as I could see the I.R.B. and Sinn Féin members were the driving force on that committee. This committee was, at the time, the County Committee of the organisation. [2]Early in March, 1914, training commenced in the old Butter Market shed in Kilkenny's Market Place, under Instructors who were formerly in the British Army, or on the British Army Reserve. Mr. Thomas Connolly, of Michael Street, Kilkenny, was the principal Instructor. Training and instruction on military matters proceeded normally for about four months, when there was a strong move by the Redmondites and A.O.H. men to get full control and oust the I.R.B. and Sinn Féin members. This first appeared openly early in July, 1914, when a number of Redmondite and A.O.H. refused, on parade, to obey the orders of the Instructor and some of the officers and men left the ranks as a protest when they would not be let do what they liked. Although I did not know, at the time, what was cooking, I looked upon the action of the men who had refused to obey orders as mutiny; therefore, I stood fast with the remainder of the Company which did likewise, and I was put in charge of what was left of the Company. The incident was patched up by the controlling committee and the Company was again, after a short time, almost up to full strength. But this was only for a short spell, as, seemingly, the Redmondites and A.O.H. were bent on having full control. Sometime in July, 1914, the old obsolete Italian rifles, for which there was not a round of ammunition, were issued to the Companies. These rifles were humourously dubbed "the gas pipes". The purchase and issue of such rubbish to the men put a lot of them thinking, and subsequently on the top of this, when the first World War broke out, recruiting for the British Army was openly advocated and encouraged by the Redmondites and A.O.H. organisation; with the result that a crisis, arose in the [3] Irish National Volunteers, and early in September, 1914, the matter came to a head at a full parade of all the City Companies in the Market place, Kilkenny. There were about 650, counting officers, N.C.Os and men On parade on that occasion. All assembled were addressed by Reverend J. Rowe, St. Mary's, James' Street, Kilkenny, and Reverend Philip Moore, St. John's, Kilkenny; the trend of whose addresses favoured the policy of the Redmondites and A.O.H. They were very vigorously replied to

and opposed by Peter De Loughry, of Parliament Street, Kilkenny, Pat Corcoran, Patrick Street, Kilkenny, and Ned Comerford of Wellington Square, Kilkenny, on behalf of the Irish Ireland side (otherwise Sinn Féin and I.R.B.). After numerous very hot exchanges by the speakers referred to and the parade moving towards a riotous state, Peter De Loughry called on all those who stood for Ireland and the Green Flag to fall out and line up at a point indicated by him, near the Poultry Sheds in the market place; and all those who stood for England and the Union Jack to stand where they were. Twenty-eight men left the ranks and lined up at the point indicated for those who stood for Ireland and the Green Flag: and the balance on parade (over 600) stood on the Redmondite side. I was put in charge of the 28 men who stood for Ireland on that occasion and I formed them into Company formation and marched them out of the Market amidst a most hostile demonstration. Tempers on both sides were very frayed and a feather could have turned it into a riot. I marched the 28 to what was then known as the Banba Hall (formerly Ketler's Inn, St. Kieran Street, which was at the time occupied by Fianna Eireann). This hall was from that time onwards, called "The Irish Volunteer's Hall" and was the Headquarters of the only Company of the Irish Volunteers in the City of Kilkenny up to 1916.[4]

I give the above brief details of the position in Kilkenny at that time so that the reader can visualise the relative support for each side in Kilkenny at the time of what was then known as "The Split in the Volunteers".

1914 After the Split.

From September, 1914, "A" company, Irish Volunteers, having only a roll of 28 men was obviously under strength, but, nevertheless, officers, N.C.Os and men being very enthusiastic, they made rapid progress with their military training. Parades were held with clock-work regularity. Training in infantry drill, arms drill (with wooden rifles), field training, manoeuvres and night operations; were carried out. Irish classes were held, lectures on military and historical subjects were given, and discussions and criticisms on each manoeuvre and operation were held. Every Sunday morning, with rare exception, the whole Company would assemble for rifle practice at the rifle range at Lower Dunmore, kindly put at the Irish Volunteers' disposal by Mr. Richard Maher. This range was situated beside what was then known as "The Long Wood" on the Lower Dunmore Road. It was not visible to the surrounding countryside as the particular field was a very deep bowl-shaped one, not far from the owner's house. Good progress was made in marksmanship with a point 22 B.S.A. rifle. In addition to this there was an air rifle range in the Volunteer Hall in St. Kieran's Street, Kilkenny. To keep the supply of ammunition up every man paid the actual amount it cost to supply whatever he used. Military manuals were got wherever they could be got or procured and these were passed around from officers to men. The publication "The Irish Volunteer" was bought and [5] distributed to the members of the Company. Each man paid for his own copy, and when they were finished with same they passed them on to their acquaintances who were not in the organisation.

Committee Governing the Irish Volunteers in Kilkenny.

In consequence of the split in the Volunteers, it naturally followed that there was a similar split in the County Committee that governed and controlled the organisation. The members of that committee who were Sinn Féin or I.R.B., formed a committee of themselves as a kind of governing body of the Irish Volunteers in the city and county Kilkenny. The principal members of this committee were Pat Corcoran, Peter De Loughry, James Nowlan, Edward Comerford. The writer was not a member of this committee or the I.R.B., therefore I am not in a position to give full details about it other than it was the link between the few scattered units of the Irish Volunteers in existence at the time in the county and city of Kilkenny, and also it was the link with the Irish Volunteers' G.H.Q. in Dublin. About a dozen new Lee Enfield rifles and about a dozen small arms automatics and revolvers were procured by the governing committee about this time and they were distributed amongst members of "A" Company and that committee. Those who received them contributed a portion of the cost which was collected in one sum or instalments as it suited the member concerned.

1915

Early in this year Captain J.J. O'Connell (afterwards General O'Connell) better known to the officers and men as [6] "Ginger O'Connell", arrived from G.H.Q. to organise and train the Irish Volunteers in the city and county of Kilkenny. He was in Kilkenny for about three months, during which time the city Company "A", made great strides in military training. The city Company and outposts were strengthened in numbers and training during this time. Only 23 members of the city Company could

be mustered for the first public parade when he arrived. It is necessary to mention here that of the 28 that came out of the. Market on the night of "the split" some failed to report after, axi4 some had to go elsewhere as their trade or calling demanded. However, after Captain O'Connell organising campaign, about a dozen recruits were got and some recruits were also got for the surrounding outposts. A training camp was held by Captain O'Connell at Galbally during that year. The following members of "A" Company attended, viz.: Jim Lalor, Eamon Comerford, Martin Kealy, Tim Hennessy and Larry De Loughry.

23rd November, 1915.

On this occasion of the commemoration of the execution of Allen, Larkin and O'Brien, the Manchester Martyrs, the new Lee Enfield rifles were carried in the demonstration, and other members of the. Company carried small arms to protect them. The oration on this occasion was delivered by seán McDermott (who was executed in 1916). He delivered the oration in the Gaelic League Rooms, in Rothes' Arch, Parliament Street, Kilkenny.

1916

In February of this year Lieutenant Edward O'Kelly (otherwise known as Ted O'Kelly), an organiser for the Irish Volunteers from G.H.Q., arrived to organise and train the [7] Irish Volunteers in county and city or Kilkenny. Lee Enfield rifles were carried on an organising route march on a Sunday early in March, from Kilkenny to Ballyfoyle, from there on to Muckalee, then from there over to Johnswell, where, after manoeuvres in the field around Johnswell, Lieutenant O'Kelly addressed a number of young men, who were attracted by the manoeuvres. He, as usual, made a very vigorous speech and exhorted them to join One man out of the lot (James Quinn of Carrigeen, Johnswell) came forward and indicated that he would join.

On route marches, etc., the Company was never halted near a pub. Drinking by members was very much discouraged and a couple of members were discharged from the company owing to intemperate habits. All members brought their own grub with them on all occasions, and on the occasion referred to in the preceding paragraph, new milk was purchased for the members of the Company to take with their lunch.

St. Patrick's Day, 1916. On this day "A" Company paraded to Mass in St. John's Kilkenny, with Republican Flag and Lee Enfield rifles.

April, 1916.

Early in April, about a fortnight before Easter, 1916, Pat Corcoran (a member of the Controlling committee), called me out from the Irish Volunteer Hall, saying someone wanted to see me outside in King Street (now St. Kieran Street) Kilkenny. On arriving outside he introduced me to Cathal. Brugha. I was not personally acquainted with him previous to this, but I knew him by [8] sight as a Commercial Traveller coming to Kilkenny. Pat Corcoran told me that Cathal Brugha had something very secret and important to tell me as Captain of "A" Company, and then Cathal Brugha told, me that the Rising was coming off at Easter, and the instructions he gave me were:

(a) General manoeuvres were to be arranged for Easter Sunday.

(b) When my company paraded for the manoeuvres referred to in (a) with whatever arms and equipment we possessed it was to proceed by way Of Borris (Co. Carlow) to the Scallop Gap on the Wexford border, Where we would link up with Wexford.

(c) NO operations were to be commenced until we linked up with Wexford.

(d) Captain J.J. O'Connell (Ginger) from G.H.Q. would be in command of all units in city and county, and all orders for the carrying out of operations and tasks were to be taken from him, and this would hold when we linked up with Wexford at the Scallop Gap. As "A" Company at that time numbered about 60, counting officers, N.C.Os. and men, and had between rifles, revolvers and small automatics what would poorly arm 25, I pointed out this position to Cathal Brugha, and he told me that there was a quantity of arms to be picked up when we arrived and contacted Dr. Dundon in Borris on Easter Sunday, and he also intimated that it was confidently expected that a further supply would be available, and he believed there would be sufficient arms and ammunition for all the available men. The above information and instructions had been given by Cathal Brugha to Pat Corcoran and Peter De Loughry, our contacts with G.H.Q.

I duly issued to "A" Company the instruction regarding the manoeuvres on Easter Sunday (without, of course, giving the slightest indication of the main objective). All available arms and equipment were to be carried, all to [9] be mounted on bicycles and a sufficient supply of rations.

On Spy Wednesday of Holy Week Peter De Loughry and James Lalor of Kilkenny and Eamon Fleming, The Swan, Leix, collected explosives at Wolfhill Coal Mine and delivered them to Mr. Patrick Ramsbottom, Portlaoighise. It was understood that these explosives were intended for Dublin. About Good Friday, Pat Corcoran, Peter De Loughry, James Lalor and Tan Furlong went to county Wexford in Peter De Loughry's motor car and collected a quantity of explosives from a brother of the said Tom Furlong. These explosives; were sent to Dublin. Easter Sunday, 23rd April. 1916.

The time for the mobilisation of "A" Company on this day was 12 o'clock, noon, at the Irish Volunteer Hall, King Street (now St. Kieran Street) Kilkenny. The first intimation that I got that there was any alteration in plans was on this morning about 10 o'clock a.m., when I saw the announcement in the "Sunday Independent" that the manoeuvres were cancelled, and, on arrival at the Volunteer Hall a short time later, some of the officers and men who had already arrived had either seen the announcement or were told about it by some of their chums who had seen it in that morning's paper. All available officers, N.C.Os and members of the Company had duly arrived on time for the mobilisation which had been arranged. In consultation with the Company officers I did not dismiss the Company until dinner time (about 2 o'clock p.m.) as it was thought that official intimation by way of dispatch or message might arrive. I gave the Company instructions to mobilise again at the [10] Volunteer Hall at 8 o'clock that night. In the meantime, after dinner, the officers who were in the know about what the manoeuvres arranged for that day were really for, assembled again at the Hall and discussed the situation and details. Some officers from some of the outposts in the county also attended at the hall. The whole Company again mobilised at 8 o'clock that night at the hall. It was expected that pat Corcoran who was in Dublin that day, would be back with definite news or instructions of some sort. About 10 o'clock p.m. he arrived at the hall accompanied by Captain J.J. O'Connell (Ginger) with official word that everything was "off". The Company was then dismissed. Easter Monday, 24th April, 1916.

On this morning Pat Corcoran and Peter De Loughry went down in Peter De Loughry's motor car to bring up to Kilkenny the guns which were under the control of Dr. Dundon in Borris. At about 2 o'clock p.m. on this date I received word from Lieutenant Pierce Britt, "A" Company, that word had arrived at the railway station, Kilkenny that hostilities had broken out in Dublin, but that the report was confused. I had word sent to all the available officers, N.C.Os and men of "A" Company to mobilise in the vicinity of Stallard's garden, at Asylum Lane, Kilkenny, at 7 o'clock on this night. This place was chosen as it was here the car containing the guns from Borris was to arrive, and it was on the edge of the town. A party from "A" Company met the car carrying the guns about 8 o'clock pm on the Thomastown Road just above [11] Archer Street, and had the corrugated iron gate opened leading into Stallard's field at the city aide of the Tennis Ground, to enable the car to pass in that way. This party of men helped to push the car up the rise over the soft ground in the field until it arrived at the entrance from the field side into Stallard's garden where the guns, which consisted of about 30 single-barrel breech-loading shotguns, with a quantity of ammunition to suit them, were unloaded, and all were distributed amongst the members of "A" company. Before dismissing the men after this operation, in view of the situation which had arisen, they were instructed by me to hold themselves readily available to be called on at any time and also instructed to mobilise at the Volunteer Hall on the following night. There were two R.I.C. Barracks at the time in Kilkenny City: one in Parliament Street and one in John Street, estimated strength forty men. The Military Barracks were occupied by British soldiers, estimated at four hundred. Kilkenny City R.I.C. kept mostly confined to their barracks during the week. It was only those R.I.C. who lived outside in private houses that were moving to and fro. Some R.I.C. from barracks outside the city were drafted in to reinforce the city R.I.C. towards the end of the week. The military were confined to barracks during the week.

Tuesday, 25th April, 1916.

On this night, officers, N.C.Os and men of "A" company mobilised at the Irish Volunteer Hall at 8 o'clock p.m. captain J.J. O'Connell (Ginger) discussed the situation with representatives of the controlling committee, Company officers [12] and representatives of the outlying units. As there was no clear word of what was happening beyond the news that trickled through about the fighting in Dublin, Captain O'Connell arranged to have a dispatch sent to Limerick to find out how the position stood in Munster and generally as there were all kinds of rumours afloat. The Company was dismissed about 11 o'clock p.m. with instructions to mobilise at the same place at a o'clock p.m. on the following night.

Wednesday 26th April, 1916.

On this day Captain J.J. O'Connell sent James Lalor of Walkin Street, Kilkenny, with a dispatch to Mr. James Leddon of Limerick. He travelled there on his motor bicycle and he duly contacted Mr. Leddon and got from him all available information in his possession as regards how things were generally, and he brought back a dispatch to the effect that Limerick was "not out".

"A" Company mobilised as directed at the Volunteer Hall at 8 o'clock on this night. The situation was discussed by Captain J.J. O'Connell, members of controlling committee and the Company officers, and whatever representatives were present from outlying units. It was late when Jim Lalor arrived back from his long journey with the dispatch from Limerick referred to above."A" Company was dismissed at about 11 o'clock p.m. and ordered to mobilize at the same place on the following night. Some lapsed members and about a dozen others attended at the Volunteer Hall and joined the Company during the week. [13]

Thursday, 27th April, 1916.

"A" Company again mobilised at the Volunteer Hall as directed 8 o'clock p.m. and the results of the despatches to and from Limerick were discussed by Captain J.J. O'Connell, representatives of the controlling committee and the Company officers and representatives from outposts. The Company was directed to mobilise again at the same place at 8 o'clock on the following night.

Friday, 28th April, 1916.

"A" Company again mobilised at the Volunteer Hall at 8 p.m. as directed, when the position, as then existed, according to the available reports, was considered by Captain O'Connell, representatives of the controlling committee and the Company officers and any representatives of outpost units present. It was ordered that the Company again mobilise on the following night at the same place at the same time. There were no absentees from the Company during the week and all officers, N.C.Os. and men mobilised as directed. The same remark applied to those who rejoined the Company and the new recruits who came to the hall during the week.

Saturday, 29th April, 1916.

News of the surrender in Dublin arrived in Kilkenny about 3 o'clock on this day, and it was decided to call off the mobilisation called for that night. There was no surrender of arms in Kilkenny.

In a schedule attached to these notes I give the names and addresses, as far as can now be ascertained, of officers, N.C.Os and men at this date. There is only one Section Book available, i.e. No. 1 Section. [14]

The Arrests in Kilkenny.

On 3rd May, 1916, the arrests commenced. Captain J.J. O'Connell (Ginger) was taken into custody on this date and lodged in Kilkenny Gaol. On the 4th May, 1916, Peter De Loughry of Parliament Street was arrested and lodged in Kilkenny Gaol on this date. Alderman James Nowlan of Bishop's Hill, Kilkenny, was arrested when he stepped off the train from Dublin on this evening and lodged in Kilkenny Gaol. On this evening, 4th May, a large number of British Cavalry and Infantry arrived in Kilkenny City to reinforce the British Army in the Kilkenny Barracks. Between the number of troops already in the Barracks and the reinforcements it was estimated there were about 1,100.

5th May, 1916.

On this morning about 11 o'clock the town was heavily patrolled by British Infantry and Cavalry (about 800 strong), accompanied by a strong force of about 200 police. Streets were cordoned off and the general arrests began. Houses and shops were entered and "wanted" men were arrested.

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9th May, 1916.

On this day under a heavy escort of British infantry, cavalry and R.I.C., all the above-mentioned prisoners were removed on foot, from the Kilkenny Gaol and marched to the railway station, Kilkenny. On the march to the station, John Kealy, one of the prisoners, who was ill when he was arrested, had not strength to complete the journey to the station and he collapsed and died in Upper John Street, about thirty yards from his own door. He was at the extreme rere of the line of prisoners and gradually those in front of him without noticing it left him tailed off, and, when he collapsed the

military closed the gap between him and the prisoners in front, and in that way the prisoners did not know what happened to him.

[16]

All the prisoners were put in a special train and brought to Kingsbridge, Dublin. When the writer got out of the train he noticed that John Kealy was missing, and he enquired from the prisoners near him, but they knew nothing about him. The prisoners were then marched from Kingsbridge, Dublin, to Richmond Barracks, Dublin, where they were put into barrack rooms, which at the beginning, were overcrowded with prisoners, and prisoners had to sleep on the floor, but after a week or so, as the deportations continued, the room space increased.

WS1006 **Martin Kealy**

I was born in the year of 1892 at Blanchfield's Park, Gowran County Kilkenny, just about two miles from where I now reside. My father was a farmer, and in my early youth, that is from about the time I was 6 years old until I reached the age of 18 year, I attended the National School at Gowran. After leaving the National School I continued my education at the City Vocational School, Kilkenny. At that time it was necessary to pass an examination to gain admission to the Vocational School, and my later years in Gowran National School were spent in preparation for this entrance examination. In the year of 1912 I took up a clerical position in the firm of Messrs. Cleere & Son, Builders, Kilkenny.

I joined the Volunteers - then known as the Irish National Volunteers - at a meeting which was held in the City Hall, Kilkenny, on 5th March, 1914. This meeting, which was held for the purpose of starting the Volunteer Movement in Kilkenny, was addressed by Sir Roger Casement and Thorns McDonagh both of whom were executed by the British in 1916.

My connection with the Movement in Kilkenny was, however, soon interrupted as I left Kilkenny shortly afterwards to take up a position in Dundrum Asylum, County Dublin, where I remained for about six months. Acting on my Doctor's advice, who considered that the environment of Dundrum Asylum was not suitable for me, I resigned my position and returned to work on my father's farm at Blanchfield's Park. [2] The split in the Volunteer Movement took place during the period I was employed at Dundrum Asylum. I have a distinct recollection of a spirited discussion which took place at that time with some other members of the staff on the merits of the Irish Volunteers who followed Pádraig Pearse as compared with the Redmondite Volunteers who followed the Irish Party leader, the late John E. Redmond. As far as I can now recollect I was the sole supporter of the Irish Volunteers in that discussion. Mr. Thomas Treacy, Mr. James Lalor or Mr. Edward Comerford, will, I am sure, give the story of the split in the Volunteer organisation in Kilkenny City.

On my return home I formed a Company of Irish Volunteers in the Clara district which was adjacent to my home in Blanchfield's Park. The strength of this Company was about 15 or 20 men. I became O/C. of this Company, and Mr. Patrick Foley, Clara, was the Company Lieutenant. We held weekly parades and engaged in foot drill and elementary field exercises. Our arms consisted of a few shotguns which were the private property of members of the Company. I had a .32 revolver which I obtained from the late Peter De Loughry, Kilkenny.

There was then no Battalion or Brigade organisation in the area, but in some undefined way we, in the Clara Company, looked to a committee which was in charge of the Volunteers in Kilkenny City and County for guidance and instruction. The principal members of this committee, which was known as the governing committee were, as far as I can now recollect, the late Alderman James Nowlan, Peter De Loughry (later T.D. and Senator), Patrick Corcoran, Tom Stallard and Edward Comerford. All these men were, I believe, members of the Irish Republican Brotherhood.

Sometime in the summer of 1915, I think about August of that year, I was asked at a Volunteer committee meeting to attend a training camp for Volunteer Officers which was then in existence at Galbally, Co. Limerick. [3] I gladly accepted the invitation and in company with James Lalor, Edward Comerford and with either Pierce Brett or Tim Hennessy, all members of the Kilkenny Volunteer Company, I cycled to Galbally. The training camp was under the command of Captain J. J. O'Connell ('Ginger' - later Colonel O'Connell, Assistant Chief of Staff of the Irish Army). The course of training lasted for one week, during which we were instructed in foot drill, field exercises, moving in extended formation, manoeuvres and route marches. This course also included lectures on military tactics and musketry. Captain O'Connell was the principal instructor. In addition to the Kilkenny representatives

Volunteer officers from various other counties also attended this course, and, in all, I would say that about 100 were present during the week I was there. I was at that time a member of the Kilkenny Pipers' Band and when going to Galbally I brought my set of Pipes along, and on the route marches I marched in front of the Column playing marching tunes on the Pipes as we marched along. Captain O'Connell (Ginger) was already known to me, as earlier in this year (1915) he had spent some months organising and training the Volunteers in Kilkenny City and County. The instruction which we received in the Camp was a great help to us when we resumed the training of our units.

Early in Holy Week of 1916 I received instructions from the Volunteer Committee in Kilkenny for the Clara Company to parade at Clara on Easter Sunday. I am now not sure at what particular time the parade was to take place on that day. All available arms were to be carried, and in addition each man was to bring along sufficient rations to do him for at least 24 hours. The instructions also stated that the Company should stand-to and await further orders. I duly issued these instructions to the Company, the strength of which at that time was 22, including officers, N.C.Os. and men.

[4] At the time appointed the Company paraded at full strength. Our arms consisted of the few shotguns which I have already mentioned and my .32 revolver. The supply of ammunition was limited, and many of the men had no arms at all. I should mention that at this time I had no idea that any action other than, ordinary manoeuvres was intended for this day.

After waiting for some hours, perhaps five or six, and as the expected further orders had not arrived, I decided to cycle to the Volunteer Hall in King Street (now St. Kieran Street) Kilkenny, to find out what happened and to inquire what we were to do. The distance from Clara to the Volunteer Hall in Kilkenny would be about five miles. On arriving at the Volunteer Hall, I saw some members of the governing committee and also Thomas Treacy who was then O.C. of the Kilkenny Company. I then heard of the announcement which had appeared in that day's edition of the Sunday Independent intimating that the Volunteer manoeuvres arranged for Easter Sunday were cancelled. I was told that I could dismiss the Clara Company, but to tell the men that they should hold themselves in readiness for immediate mobilisation at any time. I then returned to Clara and dismissed the parade after warning the men that they should be ready for mobilisation at a moment's notice.

On Easter Monday evening I again cycled to the Volunteer Hall in Kilkenny. On arriving there I noticed an air of tension amongst those who were present, and I then heard for the first time that the Rising had commenced that day in Dublin, and that hostilities had started in many parts of that city. I was told by Thomas Treacy or by some of the members of the governing committee that instructions were expected by either messenger or despatch and that I should continue to hold the Clara Volunteers in readiness. Captain O'Connell (Ginger) was also there, and I understand that he was endeavouring to get in touch with Limerick, and some of the neighbouring counties in an effort to discover the situation in the provinces generally.[5] I cycled to the Volunteer Hall each day during that week for news and instructions, but beyond the instruction to continue to hold the Company in readiness I received no further instructions. News of the surrender in Dublin reached Kilkenny on the Saturday afternoon of Easter Week from Thomas Treacy

I subsequently learned that the manoeuvres planned for Easter Sunday included:

- (1) Kilkenny City Company to march via Clara and Borris (Co. Carlow) to the Scallop Gap on the Wexford border to link up there with a party of County Wexford Volunteers.
- (2) My Company to join the Kilkenny City Company at Clara on the march to the Wexford border.
- (3) Additional arms to be picked up on arrival at Borne, after Dr. Dundon had been contacted there.
- (4) Captain J. J. O'Connell (Ginger), then a G.H.Q. officer, would be in the command of the Kilkenny City and County Units.

I have appended herewith a list of the names of the members of the Clara Company who paraded on Easter Sunday 1916 - see Appendix "A".

On the Saturday of the week immediately following the week of the Rising, i.e. on 6th May, 1916, I was arrested at my home by members of the R.I.C. who were, I think, accompanied by British cavalry. Two other members of the Clara Company were arrested on the same day. These were James Carrigan and John Harte. We were conveyed to Kilkenny Prison where about thirty other Volunteer Officers and men who were arrested in Kilkenny and district during that same week were held, as prisoners. These included my brother John who was engaged in business in Kilkenny City and who was an active member of the Volunteer Company there. Captain O'Connell (Ginger), whom I have already referred to, Thomas Treacy, Edward Comerford, James Lalor, [6] Peter De Loughry, Sean

Gibbons, Alderman James Nowlan, Laurence Walsh, Denis Barry, Stephen Dwyer, Tom Stallard and Timothy Hennessy were also amongst the prisoners.

After a few days in Kilkenny Prison we (i.e. all the Volunteers who were prisoners) were marched under a heavy escort of R.I.C. and British Infantry and Cavalry to Kilkenny Railway Station where we were entrained on a special train for Dublin. On the way to the railway station I was marching in the front row of the prisoners and my brother John was in the last row. John, who was seriously ill at the time of his arrest, and who received no medical attention in Kilkenny Prison, collapsed in John Street a few hundred yards from the railway station. He died shortly after his collapse. Immediately he fell the British Forces closed up the ranks - in fact the march was never halted - with the result that no one amongst the prisoners knew what happened.

On arrival at the Kingsbridge Station, we were marched to Richmond Barracks, Dublin, where a large number of prisoners, both from Dublin and various parts of the country, were assembled. Naturally I missed my brother, but no one from whom I inquired could give me any information about him. At this time we were not permitted any visits or letters, but the other Kilkenny prisoners learned of John's fate from a newspaper which was smuggled in. Out of consideration for me none of these men told me the sad news, and when eventually I did get the newspaper the portion reporting his death had been cut out.

On 12th May, 1916 in company with a number of other Volunteer prisoners, including 22 of the Kilkenny prisoners, I was removed from Richmond Barracks, Dublin, and brought to Wakefield Prison, England, where I remained a prisoner until 7th June, 1916 on which date I was released. On the train journey back I was accompanied by a number of other released prisoners one of whom, whose name I cannot now recall but who I believed was from the County Wexford, remarked that it was very [7] sad about the prisoner who died on the way to the railway station in Kilkenny. I immediately replied, "That must have been my brother". He was nudged by the man sitting next to him and no further conversation on the matter took place. On arrival at the North Wall, Dublin, I was met at the boat by a distant relative who was in the habit of visiting my home at Blanchfield's Park at holiday time. She was a Miss Bollard and at that time she was employed in the G.P.O., Dublin. She took me to her home in Church Street, Dublin and from her I then got, for the first time, the news of John's collapse and sudden death. After a day or two in Dublin, during which I visited the scenes of the fighting during the Rising, I returned by train to my home. what would otherwise have been a happy reunion with my family was, of course, saddened by the circumstances of my brother's untimely death.

WS 1032 **Jim Lalor**

Republican Brotherhood by the late Peter de Loughrey, who was then Head Centre of the I.R.B. in Kilkenny. It was in de Loughrey's own house in Parliament St. that I took the I.R.B. oath. Meetings of the I.R.B. Centre were held at irregular intervals, generally on Sunday evenings; in Tom Stallard's garden. The principal business discussed at these meetings was organisation and the admittance of new members. Occasionally a member of the I.R.B. in Dublin attended our meetings and stressed the need for keeping the organisation alive and active. As far as, I can now recollect, there were then about 20 members of the I.R.B. in Kilkenny.

On the 5th March, 1914, a meeting was held in the City Hall, Kilkenny, for the purpose of starting the Volunteer movement in Kilkenny. The principal speakers at this meeting were Sir Roger Casement and Thomas McDonagh, both of whom were subsequently executed by the British for their part in the Rising of 1916. The speakers were well and enthusiastically received and after the meeting a large number of young men, myself included, handed in their names; to become members of the new organisation then known as "The Irish National Volunteers At this time I was 26 years of age and was engaged with my father in his building business in Friary St., Kilkenny.

From its inception until the time of the 'split', i.e., about six months afterwards, the Volunteer movement in Kilkenny was controlled by a committee composed partly of supporters of [2] John Redmond's Party and partly of members of the Irish Republican Brotherhood and Sinn Féin. Training and instruction in military matters were carried out under instructors who were formerly members of the British army. Sometime about July 1914, obsolete Italian rifles for which there was no

ammunition were received from Dublin and were issued to members of the Volunteers. These rifles, which had very long barrels, were soon nicknamed the 'gas pipes'. When the European War broke out in August 1914, the Redmondite supporters on the Volunteer committee made a strong move to get complete control of the Volunteers and to oust the I.R.B. and Sinn Fein members. They - the Redmondite members of the committee - openly advocated and encouraged recruiting for the British army with the result that a crisis soon arose in the ranks. The matter came to a head at a parade in the Market Place, Kilkenny, early in September 1914. I was not present at this parade as I was in Dublin at the time on business for my father, but I am aware that the parade was addressed by supporters of the Redmondite policy, and by the late Peter de Loughrey, Pat Corcoran and Ned Comerford on behalf of the I.R.B. and Sinn Fein side. Eventually a party of about 30 Volunteers, who decided to follow de Loughrey, Corcoran and Comerford, fell in at one point in the Market Place and marched, under Thomas Treacy, to the Banba Hall, St. Kieran St. (then called King St.). Being a member of the I.R.B., I naturally, on my return from Dublin a day or two later, threw in my lot with this party. We became known as A/Company of the Irish Volunteers. The hall became known as the Volunteer Hall and those who followed the Redmondite supporters became known as the Redmondite Volunteers. Thomas Treacy was elected captain of the company and I was appointed section commander of No. 1 section. Naturally the split in the Volunteers brought about a split in the controlling committee already referred to.

The I.R.B. or Sinn Fein members of that committee now formed a committee of themselves to control and govern the Irish Volunteers in Kilkenny City and County. The members of this latter committee were Alderman James Nowlan, Edward Comerford, Peter de Loughrey and Patrick Corcoran. This committee was also the link between the Volunteer movement in Kilkenny and Headquarters of the Irish Volunteers in Dublin. The members of the company were very enthusiastic and made good progress with their military training. Parades were held at regular intervals and on Sunday mornings, with few exceptions, rifle practice was carried out in a field at Lower Dunmore. This rifle practice was done with a .22 B.S.A. rifle. In addition to infantry and arms drill, Irish classes were held and lectures were given on military and historical subjects. The publication "The Irish Volunteer" was distributed amongst members of the company. Each man paid for his copy. With a view to strengthening our numbers, a constant lookout was kept for suitable new members. In the summer of 1915, in company with Ned Comerford, Laurence de Loughrey and Timothy Hennessy of A/Company, and Martin Kealy of the Clara (Co. Kilkenny) Company, I attended a course of training at a Volunteer Camp. at Galbally, Co. Limerick. This camp was run on strictly military lines.

A G.H.Q. officer - Captain J.J. O'Connell (Ginger) - was in charge and was the principal instructor. He was a strict disciplinarian. On one occasion during the time I was there I remember him refusing a pass-out to two men who were attending the course, and who wished to attend a ceili which was being run that night by the Cumann na mBan in Galbally, on the grounds that the programme for the following day included a long route march, and a full day's field exercises for which they must conserve their energies. Not to be outdone, however, the two boys crept out of the camp after 'lights out' that night, cycled to Galbally on bicycles which they had arranged to be left in a nearby field for them, and attended the ceili. Next morning they appeared with their towels and soap when we went to a nearby stream for our morning wash. Their absence from the camp during the night was not noticed. More than 20 years later I mentioned this incident to Ginger one evening when we were having a friendly chat in Wynn's Hotel in Dublin. He laughed heartily, but mentioned that had he known it at the time we were in the camp, he would certainly have punished the two culprits.

The course at the camp at Galbally lasted for about one week. I should say that about 60 or 70 men from various counties attended during the period I was there. Amongst others whose acquaintance I made during this course was that of Mr. Frank Fahy, later Speaker of Dáil Éireann. Later in the year, i.e. 1915 or early in 1916, Captain O'Connell visited Kilkenny for some weeks during which time he was busy organising and training the Volunteers in the city and county. On 23rd November 1915, the annual commemoration of the Manchester Martyrs took place in Kilkenny. 'A' Company marched in the demonstration and carried some new Lee Enfield rifles which had been obtained some short time previously by the Controlling Committee. After the public demonstration an oration was delivered by Sean McDermott in the Gaelic League Rooms in Parliament St. When speaking privately to Sean McDermott that same evening, he told me that a Rising would shortly take place, but that a definite

date for it had not yet been fixed. I distinctly remember him remarking: "It will be soon, and some of us must go down in it".

1916.

Shortly before Easter Sunday of 1916 - perhaps a week or ten days before that day - I went with Tom Furlong, Peter de Loughrey and Patrick Corcoran to Skeeter Park, Clearystown, Co. Wexford, for gelignite, fuse and detonators. We travelled in a motor car owned and driven by de Loughrey. We collected the gelignite etc. at the home of Tom Furlong's brother who was then an overseer in the Wexford Co. Council. We conveyed the gelignite etc., which was packed in butter boxes, to Kilkenny from whence it was dispatched - labelled as 'Castings' - from de Loughrey's foundry premises in Parliament St., to G.H.Q. in Dublin. On the Tuesday of Holy Week, with Peter de Loughrey, and again using de Loughrey's motor car, I went to The Swan, Co. Leix. We called to the residence of the late Eamon and Patrick Fleming where we remained until it was dark. After dark and guided by Eamon Fleming, we went to Wolfhill Colliery where we collected another lot of gelignite) fuse and detonators. This lot we delivered to a Mr. Ramsbottom of Maryboro' who, I understand, was transmitting it to G.H.Q. I remember this incident distinctly by our visit to Kelly's Hotel, Maryboro' next day. We had been out all night and were very hungry as we had no breakfast. When we got to the hotel it was too early for dinner so we ordered tea with steak and onions for the three of us. The waiter stared at us in a strange manner, but passed no remark. He served the meal to which we did justice, but still we noticed that he continued to stare at us in a strange way. Subsequently it dawned on us that the day was Spy Wednesday and, of course, a fast day. Our ordering and eating steak on that day must have shocked the poor waiter.

It was, as far as I can now recollect, on the occasion of this trip to the Swan that I learned from de Loughrey that the Rising, about which Sean McDermott had spoken to me the previous November, was fixed to start on Easter Sunday and that the manoeuvres arranged for that day were, in so far as the Kilkenny Volunteers were concerned, just a ruse to get the men to the Scallop Gap on the Wexford border, where we were to link up with a party of Wexford Volunteers, without attracting the suspicion of the British authorities.

At this time I owned and rode a motor bicycle and was frequently called upon to deliver dispatches. On Good Friday of 1916, someone - whom I cannot now, unfortunately, recall asked me to go with a dispatch to a Mr. Doyle at a printing works in Enniscorthy. I immediately set off with the dispatch which I duly delivered. I had no idea what this dispatch was about, but on page 51 of his book "Allegiance" which was published in 1950, Mr. Robert Brennan writes as follows:-

"We were all very glum and we were particularly so the next day when a dispatch rider from Kilkenny arrived with the definite news that the Kilkenny Brigade would not come out since there was disagreement in the staff at G.H.Q. As Kilkenny was to work with us, this was a serious blow, but we determined that if a start was made in Dublin we would be in the fight".

This first appeared when Mr. Brennan's story was published in serial form in the "Sunday Press". To say the least of it, I was astounded when I read it as I was convinced, and am still convinced, that no member of the Controlling Committee, nor any officer of the Irish Volunteers in Kilkenny, issued such a dispatch, nor were any of them likely to be aware of any disagreement amongst the staff at G.H.Q. It certainly was never mentioned in I.R.B. circles in Kilkenny. I discussed the matter with the surviving members of the controlling committee and with Mr. Thomas Treacy who was the senior Volunteer officer in Kilkenny in 1916, but none of them had any knowledge of the dispatch. I then visited Mr. Brennan at his home in Dublin and asked him how he came to make such a statement and asked him to tell me who signed the dispatch. This he declined to do. I pressed him strongly on the point that in fairness to all concerned the name of the author of the dispatch should be published in the book, but he remained adamant in his attitude, but he agreed that when his book was being published he would put in a footnote stating that "The Kilkenny Volunteers now living know nothing of this dispatch". The footnote which also appears on page 51 of the book reads as follows:-

"It is only fair to say that the surviving leaders of the Kilkenny Volunteers know nothing of the contents of this dispatch. The Kilkenny men were mobilised under arms on Easter Sunday and again on Easter Monday night only to be disbanded each time on the orders of General O'Connell".

It was customary at the time for dispatches from Dublin to circulate through Kilkenny to other places, and it is my idea that this particular dispatch originated in Dublin, and that Mr. Brennan should be approached again to say who signed it.

On Easter Sunday 1916, in accordance with the instructions of the Company O/C., I paraded with my section at the Volunteer Hall. at 12 noon. There was a full muster of the company which, at this time, was about 60 strong. All available arms were carried. These consisted of about a dozen rifles, some shotguns and a few revolvers scarcely sufficient to arm half a company. At the time of the parade practically everyone was aware of the announcement which appeared in that day's 'Sunday Independent' stating that the manoeuvres arranged for that day were cancelled At 2 p.m. the company was dismissed with instructions to mobilise again at the Volunteer Hall at 8 p.m. that night. At 8 p.m. there was again a full mobilisation of the company. Pat Corcoran - member of the controlling committee - was in Dublin that day and was expected back with definite instructions. At about 10 p.m., Captain J.J. O'Connell (Ginger) arrived at the Hall with word that everything was "off". The company was then dismissed with instructions to parade again on Monday night at 8 p.m. Shortly afterwards Pat Corcoran arrived back from Dublin. His news must have been similar to Ginger O'Connell's, for no fresh orders or instructions were issued.

On Easter Monday morning of 1916, I went with Pat Corcoran and Peter de Loughrey to Borris, Co. Carlow, to collect arms which were under the control of Dr. Dundon there. We travelled in de Loughrey's motor car. On reaching Borris we contacted Dr. Dundon and collected the arms, which consisted of about 10 or 15 shotguns and some cartridges. These guns and cartridges had been stored in a mill in Borris. The cartridges were damp and many of them did not fit the guns. We arrived back in Kilkenny about 8 p.m. and at a point on the Thomastown Road, near Archer St., we were met by a party of Volunteers "from/Company who assisted in pushing the motor car into Stallard's garden. Here the guns were distributed amongst the members of the Volunteer party. Had the original instructions for Easter Sunday not been countermanded, these guns would have been collected in Borris by the Kilkenny Volunteers on their march to the Scallop Gap.

On Easter Tuesday night at 8 p.m. the company again mobilised at full strength and under arms at the Volunteer Hall. There was still no word or instruction from G.H.Q. and only rumours of the fighting in Dublin trickled through. Late on this night I was given a dispatch by Captain O'Connell (Ginger) with instructions to bring it next day to Mr. James Lyddon in Limerick. He gave me full particulars of Mr. Lyddon' address and how best to find him. If I failed to find Mr. Lyddon on my arrival in Limerick, I was to contact a Father O'Connell who, Ginger assured me, would find Lyddon for me. About 6 a.m. on the Wednesday morning I set out on my motor cycle for Limerick. When passing through Nenagh I was held up and questioned by R.I.C. After inspecting my licence they inquired to know where I was going. I replied that I was going to Lisdoonvarna for a few days holiday. The policeman who asked the questions then said that I would be lucky if I got across the Shannon as all the bridges were blocked by British military. After a further exchange of greetings, during which the R.I.C. man remarked that we were living in dangerous times, I proceeded on my way. On reaching Limerick I had little or no difficulty in finding Mr. Lyddon. Having read the dispatch he inquired if I was aware of its contents. I replied in the negative. He then told me that Captain O'Connell wanted to know if the landing of the German arms on the Kerry coast had been successfully carried out and, if so, that he proposed to send a party of Volunteers from Kilkenny to collect some of the a-rms. Mr. Lyddon told me to tell Captain O'Connell that the attempt to land the arms had been a complete failure and, consequently, no arms were available. I came back to Kilkenny by another route, i.e. through Rearcross and Thurles, thus avoiding Nenagh, and gave Mr. Lyddon's message to Captain O'Connell at the Volunteer Hall. On my way back I met near Rearcross a convoy, of about ten motor car loads of R.I.C. They were headed towards Limerick, but at the time I met them they were halted on the road repairing a flat tyre on one of their cars. They allowed me to pass without question.

The company mobilised each night at the Volunteer Hall during Easter Week. There were no absentees, and about a dozen new members called to the Hall and joined the company during that week.

The strength of the enemy garrison in Kilkenny city at this time was approximately 440, consisting of in or about 40 R.I.C. men divided between two R.I.C. barracks - one in John St. and one in Parliament St. - and about 400 British soldiers stationed in the military barracks. The R.I.C. kept mostly confined to their barracks during the week, only those who lived outside the barracks in private houses moved to and fro. The military were confined to their barracks during the week. On the 3rd May, 1916, Capt. O'Connell (Ginger) was arrested by British Forces and lodged in Kilkenny Gaol. On the following day Peter de Loughrey and Alderman James Nowlan were taken into custody and also lodged in Kilkenny

Gaol. On the morning of the following day, i.e., May. 5th, the city of Kilkenny was heavily patrolled by a force of British infantry and cavalry about 800 strong. They were accompanied a strong force of about 200 R.I.C. men. Streets were cordoned off, houses and shops; were entered, and general arrests began.

I was one of about 25 arrested on this day and brought to Kilkenny Gaol. By May 9th, on which day we were removed to Richmond military barracks, Dublin, the number of Volunteers held as prisoners in Kilkenny Gaol would, I should say, be about 30 or 35. Before leaving Kilkenny Gaol rather an unusual Incident occurred. We were addressed by a Capuchin priest from the Friary in Kilkenny. He appealed to us to arrange to have the arms belonging to the Volunteers handed over to the British forces. The poor man appeared to have been well primed with British propaganda, for he stated that in return for the handing over of the arms the British authorities had assured him that we would be dealt with leniently.. Peter de Loughrey replied on behalf of the prisoners by simply suggesting to the priest that he give us his; blessing and let the matter rest at that. There could be no question of our handing over any arms to the British. The good priest then gave us his blessing and departed. On the march from Kilkenny Gaol to Kilkenny railway station where we entrained for Dublin, one of the prisoners, John Kealy, dropped dead in John St. He was very ill at the time of his arrest and, if my memory serves me right, he was refused a drink of water before leaving the gaol.

WS 1101 Martin Cassidy

I joined the Irish National Volunteers When they were formed in Kilkenny city in March, 1914. At that time I was twenty-three years of age, having been born in the year of 1891. I was then employed in the firm of Messrs. Smithwick & Co., Brewers and Maltsters, Parliament Street, Kilkenny. When the split took place in the Volunteer movement, I was one of a small party of about thirty Volunteers who followed Peter de Loughrey, Patrick Corcoran, Ned Comerford and Thomas Treacy. This small party formed the first Irish Volunteer company in Kilkenny. It became known as A. Company, and Thomas Treacy was the first company commander. The split in the Volunteer movement in Kilkenny and. the Formation of A. Company took place, as far as I can now recollect, about September, 1914. It was certainly shortly after the outbreak of the European war.

Training was carried out on weekdays after tea in the evening, and on Sunday mornings after Mass. On the Sunday mornings the training generally took: the form of a march to a field at Lower Dunmore where rifle practice was carried out, with a point 22 B.S.A. rifle. On Easter Sunday, 1916, I paraded under arms with the company at the Volunteer hall at twelve o'clock noon. We remained on parade until 2 p.m. when we were dismissed by the Company O/C, with instructions to parade again at 8 p.m. that night. As instructed, I paraded again that night. Sometime about 11 p.m., after Captain J.J. O'Connell (Ginger) had arrived at the hall, we were again dismissed.

On Easter Monday evening at about 7 p.m., a party of Volunteers from the company, of whom I was one, met a motor car on the Thomastown Road near Archer Street, Kilkenny. The car, which was driven by Peter de Loughrey, was returning from Borris, Co. Carlow, where it had gone earlier that day to collect arms. Accompanying Peter de Loughrey in the car were James Lalor and Patrick Corcoran. The Volunteer party was in charge of Thomas Treacy. We pushed the motor car into Stallard's garden where the arms, which were American breech-loading shotguns, were distributed amongst the Volunteers. There were, as far as I can now recollect, about fifty rounds of ammunition for each gun. I was given custody of a large number of the guns and a quantity of ammunition which I brought to my residence in Patrick Street. I hid the guns and ammunition under the flooring boards and in such a way that they were readily accessible, should they be required by the company.

At the end of the week and after we heard of the surrender in Dublin, I discussed with Pat Corcoran the question of the safety of the guns which were hidden in my residence. Pat Corcoran, who also resided in Patrick Street, was a carpenter by trade. He made a large wooden box, into which we put the shotguns and the ammunition. This box and its contents was then buried in a large hole inside the enclosure in the grounds of St. Joseph's Convent, Patrick Street. I cannot say when, or in what circumstances, the shotguns and ammunition were removed from St. Joseph's Convent. They certainly were never captured by the British forces in the many raids which they carried out after the Rising.

WS 699 Letter from **Tom Stallard** to his sister contained in her statement

Dear Josie,

In reply to yours. Cathal Brugha came down here about March 1916 and told us there was going to be a rising. As it was the first we heard of it we held a meeting and sent Peter de Loughry and Pat Corcoran up to Dublin to see McNeill (Eoin) to know something about it. They saw him and he said the first he knew about it himself was when a few more lads from other parts of the country went to him on the same mission. Anyway they came to an agreement that if McNeill did not give orders to Kilkenny to rise, Kilkenny would not rise. We would do whatever McNeill ordered and he never ordered us to rise. Ginger O'Connell was in Kilkenny on either Easter Sunday or Monday and I don't remember if he was here the whole week or not as he was going between Wexford and Kilkenny during the week. As to the date Ginger was arrested I would say it was; about May 2 or 3. This is how he was arrested. Head Constable Frizelle went over to de Loughry where he was staying to arrest him but they came to a decision that there would be no arrest but that if Ginger would go up to the jail himself it would suit Frizelle all right, so he went up.

About Easter Week P.D. told me at the time while the fight was on that some girl called to him. I think her name was Price, so if he told her he was carrying out any orders they were McNeill's orders. I don't know if P.D. was very anxious to fight or not. Of course Ginger was acting at the time on behalf of McNeill as were other people from Dublin (such as Bulmer Hobson) in other parts of the country, but at the same time if Liam Mellows had been here he would have brought the Kilkenny lads out.

Now Bob Brennan published a book a few months ago. He published it in serial form in the Sunday Press and in one of the early chapters dealing with Wexford he stated that a despatch arrived from Kilkenny saying that under no circumstances would Kilkenny turn out. When we saw this we held a meeting of the few that are left and no one knew anything of such a despatch. I wanted the lads to write to Brennan asking him to leave, that reference out of the book and that if he did not do it to write to the Sunday Press asking him to produce the dispatch or withdraw the reference. They wouldn't agree to do what I wanted and decided to send Jim Lalor to see him and put the request to him. He said he wouldn't do that but would agree to put in a footnote saying that the Kilkenny lads were mobilised on Easter Sunday and Monday nights but he didn't withdraw the charge and it's a pity someone wouldn't write the Press about it. If you would look at the Book you would see the reference. I understand that before the rising took place that Pearse and Co. got on to McNeill and that he agreed to fall in with rising on condition that the German ship landed the arms, but as they were never landed his agreement never came into action. So the despatch that Brennan states was sent to Wexford before Good Friday, the day the ship went down, how could the alleged despatch be correct?

A few months ago an officer, Commandant Sean Brennan of the Bureau of Military History called in here and said he was collecting all the information he could get. He also called on Tom Treacy, Tom Furlong, Jim Lalor and Ned Comerford. As a result we held a meeting and Tom Treacy was deputed to collect all the information he could get from anyone who could give it to him and he is still engaged on that job.

Now I think that is all I can give you. If you think there might be more you can drop me a line. You must excuse this being written in pencil but as my mind is more or less confused it's easier rub out mistakes in pencil than in ink. We are all well here and I hope you are in the same way. I hope Tom's printing business is going on all right.

(Sgd.) Yrs.