

attacked the strongly fortified RIC Barrack at Ballylanders. Exactly one month later, on May 28, in a second major operation, the same unit attacked the even more strongly defended RIC Barracks at Kilmallock.

More than 60 Volunteers took part in each operation. Because of the nature of the guerrilla war, the units involved were—at that time anyway—much too small to mount such operations on their own. Nor would any single unit have had sufficient arms to mount such an operation on its own.

Accordingly, men were drafted in from further afield to set and man roadblocks, in two rings, in order to inhibit reinforcements coming to the aid of the besieged RIC and to prevent them from making their

frontal or a flank attack appeared to offer any hope of success. But during the planning conferences, it emerged that, provided the attacking forces were audacious enough, there was one weak spot—the roof!

How to get to it? Although Ballylanders RIC Barracks seemed, on the face of it, impervious to attack from small arms, however, determined, this one weak spot was to prove its undoing and be the catalyst for many future attacks of a similar nature.

Although the barrack was strongly reinforced and was capable of withstanding anything short of medium weapons and explosives, it was a semi-detached building, an identical one, the Dispen-

11pm. Malone, who was also in charge of the lead attack unit in the Dispensary, had infiltrated this earlier. Coming up to midnight, the other five positions in Burke's, Upton's, O'Grady's, Condon's and Crowley's were all manned, ready and waiting. Without proper defensive materials, the Volunteers barricaded the windows as best they could with mattresses and other household goods.

Just before midnight, the signal, a green light, was flashed from the Dispensary to be almost instantaneously answered by the opening shots of what was to become a memorable occasion.

Those with Malone in the Dispensary included some of the men who had planned the operation, Jack McCarthy and Tadhg Crow-

where Donnchadh O'Hannigan—later to play a dramatic role in the "Limerick Incident" in the lead-up to the Civil War—was in charge, and the other posts.

In a short time, the entire upper storey of the barracks was alight and there was little hope of maintaining the defence. Eventually the fire of the defenders died down and a white flag of surrender was displayed from a window. The five RIC men who had put up a spirited defence were unwounded and the Volunteers were elated at the success of the attack and the capture of weapons and other munitions.

The one Volunteer casualty, Sean Meade, proved not to be fatal and he recovered to later become an officer with the Brigade.

'No surrender' as Kilmallock destroyed

THE attack on Kilmallock barracks a month after that on Ballylanders was equally successful, a success, perhaps, made all the sweeter because of the strong historic associations of the town with national endeavour.

The men of the East Limerick Brigade had learned from the earlier assault on Ballylanders and on this occasion were equipped in advance with fire-bombs—what today are known as petrol bombs and, during the Emergency, were universally called Molotov cocktails—bottles of petrol or other inflammable material corked with a rag, ignited before being thrown. An adhesive was often added to the mixture.

The formidable barracks in Kilmallock was different in two respects, one of them important, to that in Ballylanders. It had a small garden in front, protected by barbed wire entanglements and sandbags which extended right round the building; like Ballylanders, it was very strong, steel-shuttered and loopholed.

But unlike Ballylanders it was completely detached, making assault through the roof more difficult. It was also more strongly garrisoned. For these reasons the dispositions in Kilmallock were also different. Nevertheless it was decided that the roof was also its weak point.

The garden meant that the building had an off-street facade. This almost, but not quite, adjoined the rear of a

building housing one of the town's principal businesses, Carroll's. Significantly Carroll's building had an additional storey and was, consequently, considerably higher than the barrack. If Carroll's was taken the barrack roof, in spite of the gap between them, might be vulnerable from its top storey.

Other buildings facing the barrack, the (then) Provincial Bank, O'Herlihy's shop and Cleary's Hotel, were occupied and another offensive post was established behind the barracks.

That was the plan of attack. It followed another that had taken place a 50 years or so earlier, a remarkable attack by the Fenian Brotherhood during the 1867 Rising in which one of the attackers was killed. A monument to him, The unknown Fenian, was subsequently erected in the town.

As in the case of Ballylanders a month almost to the very day before, some 60 volunteers mustered in a field outside the town. About half would take part in the attack, the others would set up and man perimeter barricades. Further out other barricades and blocking posts were established by local units to prevent British reinforcements reaching Kilmallock from such places as Limerick, Buttevant and Tipperary.

Tom Malone again led the roof attack party from Carroll's, from where the signal for the attack also came when all was ready. With Malone were Eddie Tobin and several



Comdt. T. O'Riordan, of Kilmallock (left) Battalion Commandant, First Galtee Battalion, who commanded the I.R.A. in the successful attack on Ballylanders Barracks and Lieut.-General Donnchadh O'Hannigan, O/C East Limerick Brigade Flying Column

other men from Ballylanders. Donnchadh O'Hannigan took the bank building, while the battalion OC, JP McCarthy, who later wrote graphic accounts of both attacks, took Herlihy's shop.

Interestingly the post in the hotel, which came under the command of Tim Crowley, was the one most conveniently occupied. Earlier that day a commercial traveller booked in and shortly before the attack he obligingly relieved the boots of his keys and opened the door to Crowley and his companions who came in carrying weapons and, the result of experience, sandbags instead of luggage.

Soon after midnight the by now established green light signal came from Carroll's and the attack opened with a fusillade of shots from all posts, and an assault on the roof of

the barracks from the skylight in Carroll's top story with heavy half hundredweight iron weights brought up for the purpose.

Significantly, too, support for this attack was well planned and a small oil tanker was brought up close to the action and out of sight of the barracks. From it oil was brought in buckets to the Carroll outpost from where it was thrown through the large hole now in the barrack roof. A grenade followed and soon the upper storey of the barrack was ablaze.

Unfortunately, the flames back-tracked leaping the gap between the two buildings and for a while the Volunteers in Carroll's were occupied with trying to control that blaze while their companions pinned down the RIC who, nevertheless, bravely maintained a steady and considerable defensive

fire from their own blazing building.

After a couple of hours in which the situation of the defenders worsened considerably, the volunteers offered them the chance of surrender, which was refused. Accordingly, the attack recommenced with renewed vigour and continued for several more hours.

Eventually, when the roof and upper floors had collapsed and the building was a mere shell, another call for surrender was decided on. Prior to making it a Volunteer named Liam Scully from Kerry opened what might be called a last fusillade to emphasise the no hope situation of the garrisons, standing openly in the middle of the street as he did so.

A single shot rang out from the burning ruins and Scully fell, the only



Sean O'Donnell and John Clancy with staff at Northside Furniture, Kileely Road



Northside Furniture, for professional advice and service on fitted kitchens and wardrobes



Graduated from Foxhall Beauty College, from left: Marie Tobin, Mungret, Sharon Maloney, Knockainey and May Leahy, Herbertstown (LL)