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PUBLIC AUDITORS

9 Lower O'Connell Street,

Dublin, 21st October 1935

The Secretary,
Military Pensions Board,
Griffith Barracks,
DUBLIN.

A Chara,

Military Service Pensions Act, 1934

In connection with the above I wish to claim on behalf of the 5th Battalion (Engineers) Dublin Brigade, that this Unit be treated as a special Unit for the purposes of Service Pensions. If the ordinary Active Service tests for Infantry Units were applied to the 5th Battalion it would result in an injustice to the men for the following reasons:-

This Battalion was organised on the basis of men being picked from the Infantry Battalions who had a special knowledge viz. Engineers, Electricians, Carpenters, etc. At first a Company was formed consisting of a section from each of the four Battalions. Eventually a Battalion was formed limited to a Company of twenty-five picked men from each of the four Infantry Battalions i.e. one hundred men in all. In due course this number was extended and no limit was placed to the number of men in this Battalion.

These men had to undergo a long period of instruction in the handling of explosives, detonators, calculations of amount of explosives for a particular job, etc., and in studying maps and plans of telephone cables, manholes, etc., throughout the city of Dublin with a view to the isolation of particular areas. Consequently during this period of instruction men were withdrawn from the ordinary Infantry activities which normally would constitute active service.

In addition to the above, the nature of their training precluded them, as a rule, from taking part in any military operations as their services were required only when a large military operation was being performed, viz., attempts at derailing troop trains, or isolation of large areas, as in the case of the burning of the Custom House. Had these men been allowed to continue in their Infantry Battalions they would probably have partaken in the engagements of their respective Units.

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It is the practice
in dealing with
claims to consider
the matters referred
to in his letter
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In determining what was Active Service in the 5th Battalion, it may be argued that these men were not, generally speaking, called upon to take part in ambushes, etc., they did not run as great a risk as the Infantry. It should be pointed out that from the point of view of the enemy activities that every time during the period of instruction which continued up to the beginning of the Civil War that Sections went to test, and to familiarise themselves in the use of explosives or to be shown a Manhole and what it contained, in the streets of Dublin, they ran just as great as the man on ambush duty. Further, every time that any work had to be carried out either for training or for an actual military operation, raids had to be made for the various tools required, viz., sledge-hammers, Bolt-cutters, acetylene plants, etc.

Further, these men were recognised by Headquarters as being in a separate category, when it was found necessary, for instruction purposes at any rate, to place them under a separate Department of the I.R.A. under the Director of Engineering.

Also, Officers of the 5th Battalion were not elected by the men as in the case of Other Battalions but were appointed by Headquarters as it was recognised that special qualifications were required.

In these circumstances I shall be obliged if the Board will be good enough to give this matter special consideration so as to ensure that due recognition will be given to the men who performed this special work.

Mise, le meas,

Wm O'Doherty

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