

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BUREAU STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21
I.C. W.S. 558

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COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 558

- | | | Witness | |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (a) | Mark Wickham,
"St. Enda's",
Curragh Rd., Cork. | (b) | John J. Lucey,
6 York Terrace,
Summerhill, Cork. |
| (c) | Patrick J. Deasy,
17 South Main St.,
Cork. | (d) | Maurice Fitzgerald,
"Inisfail", Endsleigh Park,
Douglas Road, Cork. |

Identity.

Company Officers,
'B' Company, 1st Battalion 1st Cork Brigade,
1917-1921.

Subject.

Activities of 'B' Company,
1st Battalion, 1st Cork Brigade, 1917-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No S.1781

Form B S M 2

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B. Company, 1st Battalion, 1st Cork Brigade.

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After the split the Volunteers in Cork City consisted of one Battalion but consequent on the progress of the movement it became necessary during 1917 to form a second Battalion to cope with the larger number of Volunteers.

The area allotted to B. Company comprised the tongue of land from the North and South Main Streets to the Custom House and ~~is~~ surrounded on three sides by the river Lee.

Volunteers resident in the area who had been attached to C. Company of the old Battalion formed the nucleus of the Company. Some of these Volunteers had taken part in the raid on the Cork Grammar School when a number of rifles were secured.

Frederick Murray having organised the Company returned to the Battalion Staff leaving the Company Staff as follows:-

Captain.	- Arthur White
1st Lieutenant	- Mark Wickham
2nd Lieutenant	- Sean Twomey
Adjutant	- Michael Riordan
Quartermaster	- Sean Sullivan
Section Commanders	- Sean Curran, Christopher Lucey, Patrick Deasy & Laurence O'Connor.

Consequent on the retirement in 1918 of Arthur White, due to ill health, Thomas Crofts was appointed by the Battalion as Captain of the Company.

The Company's activities consisted at first in training, purchasing arms, securing arms from deserters from the British forces, making bombs and providing guards at elections.

Christopher Lucey (Section Commander) was arrested when attending a training camp at Glandore and imprisoned in Mountjoy jail, he was released after taking part in a hunger strike. As he was liable to be re-arrested he had to go on the run and his brother Sean took his place as Section Commander.

During 1919 the Company took part in the raid on Murray's Gun Shop in Patrick Street, when a number of shot guns and ammunition were secured. Some members of the Company also took part in the attempted raid on the Killeagh Aerodrome.

Two places within the area known only to a few members were used for the storage of arms, which were taken when required from these places and distributed at another place where they were again collected and returned to the original places.

In March, 1920, guards of honour were provided by the Company at the Lying-in-State of Lord Mayor Tomas MacCurtain.

In May, 1920, the Company were on all night armed guard duty as reprisals were expected following I.R.A. activities in the City.

On the transfer of Thomas Crofts to the 1st Battalion as Vice Commandant the Company Staff was:-

Captain	- Mark Wickham
1st Lieutenant	- Sean Twomey
2nd Lieutenant	- Sean Lucey
Adjutant	- Michael Riordan
Quartermaster	- Sean Sullivan
Section Commanders	- Sean Sullivan, Maurice Fitzgerald, Patrick Deasy and Laurence O'Connor.

On the 5/4/1920 members of the Company together with members of G. Company under the command of Battalion Commandant Daniel Donovan entered the Income Tax Offices on the South Mall and prepared the building for burning, when the Caretaker and family had been escorted to a place of safety, the building was set on fire. On the arrival of the Fire Brigade the building was blazing furiously and was completely burned out the brigade being hampered by members of the Company cutting the fire hoses having returned after dumping their arms.

On the 5/6/1920 the Company was mobilised for the attack on Blarney R.I.C. Barracks. The Captain (Mark Wickham) and 1st Lieutenant (Sean Twomey) took part in the attack and the remainder of the Company were engaged in erecting barricades on the Clogheen road.

On the 1/7/1920 members of the Company were on armed patrol holding up traffic on the western end of King Street (now MacCurtain Street) when a breach was blown in the wall dividing the R.I.C. Barrack from the adjoining house.

The King Street R.I.C. Barrack was not located within the Company area but the Company received orders to burn the Barrack which had now been evacuated and on the morning of 11/7/1920 the Barrack was entered and having been prepared with paraffin oil was set on fire. The Fire Brigade arrived after the withdrawal of the Company and succeeded in extinguishing the fire.

The Barrack was again entered on the evening of 12/7/1920 when petrol was used to fire the building. The Fire Brigade were held up by a section of the Company after leaving their station and forced to return. The building was completely burnt out.

In August, 1920, an armed night patrol was surrounded by Auxiliaries at the G.P.O. but succeeded in escaping after some of the patrol had been fired on.

On several occasions armed ^{guards} ~~escorts~~ were provided by the Company to escort Brigade Commandant Lord Mayor MacSwiney to the various places in which he resided at night. Armed guards were also provided for Brigade and Battalion meetings

In September, 1920, the Company was engaged in providing intelligence reports prior to the attack on General Strickland.

In October, 1920, guards of honour were provided at the Lying-in-State of Brigade Commandant Lord Mayor Terence MacSwiney.

Also during the month of October, 1920, information was received that a resident in a hotel at Oliver Plunkett Street was in possession of a revolver and as he was not a Volunteer the hotel was raided and a .32 revolver added to the Company's arsenal.

Christopher Lucey (formerly a Section Commander of the Company) while on the run in the Ballingearry district took part in the hold up of two military lorries and having disarmed the soldiers burnt the lorries. Several rifles and equipment were secured. He was killed by Auxiliaries on the 10th November, 1920. His remains were brought to the City and interred in the Republican Plot at St. Finbarr's Cemetery, the firing party at the graveside being provided by the Company.

During the month of December, 1920, members of the Company accompanied by members of C. Company laid in ambush in the South Main Street for Auxiliaries but were forced to withdraw at curfew hour.

During 1920 the Company took part in a raid on an Auction Yard at Copley Street, when a number of military bicycles were commandeered. They also raided the Cork Blackrock & Passage Railway Stores at Merchants Quay and secured military stores. Armed evening patrols were provided for the capture of two Auxiliaries from Macroom who were in the City. The Auxiliaries were captured by other Volunteers on day duty on their return to the Garage where they had left the car in which they had arrived in the City. They were removed to the outskirts of the City and executed.

Mark Wickham resigned as Captain of the Company in December, 1920, but continued to serve as Volunteer. The Company Staff now was:-

Captain	- Sean Twomey
1st Lieutenant	- Sean Lucey
2nd Lieutenant	- Maurice Fitzgerald
Adjutant	- Michael Riordan
Quartermaster	- Sean Sullivan
Intelligence Officer	- John George McCarthy
Engineering Officer	- Patrick Cronin
Section Commanders	- Sean Sullivan, Patrick Whooley, Patrick Deasy and Laurence O'Connor.

On 24/12/1920 an armed party was provided by the Company to cover the Engineers who were engaged in wrecking the Examiner Office Printing plant.

Mark Wickham was arrested on 25/1/1921 and after being detained for 8 weeks in the Military Prison, Cork-Barracks Victoria Barracks, Cork, was interned at Spike Island.

On 1/5/1921 reprisals were ordered for the Dripsey ambush executions those engaged met in a house in Oliver Plunkett Street where Sean Lucey (1st Lieut) was accidentally shot in the thigh, he was treated at the South Infirmary and removed to the house of a friend where he remained until fully recovered.

On the 25/4/1921 the Company was engaged in raiding and censoring mails within their area.

Sean Twomey (O.C. Company) and Volunteers Michael O'Shea and Jeremiah Harrington were now attached to Cork City Active Service Unit, Sean Twomey being O.C. the Unit.

The Company Staff was:-

Captain	- Sean Lucey
1st Lieutenant	- Maurice Fitzgerald
2nd Lieutenant	- Patrick Deasy
Adjutant	- Michael Riordan
Quartermaster	- Sean Sullivan
Intelligence Officer	- Christopher Woods
Engineering Officer	- Cornelius Hickey
Section Commanders	- Sean Sullivan, Patrick Whooley, Denis Coakley and Laurence O'Connor.

In the general attack on Military and Police in the City on the 24/6/1921 the bombing of a military foot patrol at the corner of Patrick Street and Grand Parade was allotted to the Company. Orders were received that all attacks should take place at a particular time and Officers were directed to synchronise their watches with the G.P.O. clock to make certain of the time of attack. Arrangements were made for the attack, scouts were in position and bomb throwers were proceeding to their throwing positions when a post near by was attacked before time and when the bomb throwers arrived at their allotted positions the patrol had moved towards the attacked post and were out of range.

On 25/6/1921 Sean Twomey (O.C. Active City Unit) and Sean Lucey (O.C. Company) were arrested and detained at the Bridewell R.I.C. Barracks. Sean Twomey was fired on when attempting to escape and received several serious wounds. A woman who came in the line of fire was killed. He was removed to the Military Hospital at Victoria Barracks and was released during the truce having recovered. Sean Lucey was removed to the Military Prison at Victoria Barracks and released on the signing of the truce.

After the arrest of Sean Lucey the Company Staff to the signing of the truce was:-

- Captain - Maurice Fitzgerald
- 1st Lieutenant - Patrick Deasy
- 2nd Lieutenant - Patrick Whooley
- Adjutant - Michael Riordan
- Quartermaster - Sean Sullivan
- Intelligence Officer - Christopher Woods
- Engineering Officer - Cornelius Hickey
- Section Commanders - Sean Sullivan, Patrick Murphy, Denis Coakley and Laurence O'Connor.

The Company area was not a residential one a large number of business houses and banks being located therein. The active strength of the Company was 80/90 men many of whom were from the County of Cork and being employed in the City resided in boarding houses in the area.

I.R.B.

The following members of the Company were also members of the I.R.B.:-

- Mark Wickham
- Sean Twomey
- Maurice Fitzgerald
- William Cronin.

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SIGNED *Mark Wickham*
ADDRESS *St. Enda's, Currane Road, Cork*

SIGNED *John J. Lucey*
ADDRESS *64 Mt. Terrace, Summerhill Coll.*

SIGNED *Patrick J. Deasy*
ADDRESS *17 South Main St Cork*

SIGNED *M. Riordan*
ADDRESS *Tristram, Enaslough Park, Douglas Road, Cork*

Witnessed *[Signature]*

Date *12th May 1951*

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