

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO. STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21
No. W.S. 657

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 657.....

Witness

Philip Marron,
Late Garda Síochána,
'The Castle,
Dublin.

Identity.

Member of Irish Volunteers, 1917 - ;
Battalion O/C. Monaghan Battalion;
Detective Officer, Garda Síochána, to date
of death.

Subject.

- (a) His national activities 1917-1922;
- (b) Military activities, Co. Monaghan, 1918-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. ...S. 1949.....

Form B.S.M. 2

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ORIGINAL

STATEMENT BY SERGEANT PHIL MARRON,

GARDA SIOCHANA (Detective Branch)

THE CASTLE, DUBLIN

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21

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I joined the Volunteers in Bagenalstown, Co. Carlow, in or about Easter 1917. I am a native of Corduff, Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan, and I returned from Co. Carlow to my home area about September 1918, and immediately joined Corduff Company of the Volunteers. Shortly after returning home I got an appointment as a clerk in the office of the Monaghan County Surveyor, Mr. J.J. Hannigan, and I went to work in the County Surveyor's office, The Courthouse, Monaghan Town. When I arrived in Monaghan I joined the Volunteers there. At this time I think a man named Charles Emerson was Battalion O/C. Monaghan Battalion.

In the years 1918 and 1919 the Volunteers carried out a programme of training of a routine nature consisting of Company drill and route marching, etc.

In or about early January 1920, Ernie O'Malley came to North Monaghan as a Volunteer organiser and training instructor. When he was in North Monaghan he stayed in Monaghan Town. He did not remain constantly with us. He indulged in a lot of coming and going. His usual procedure was to visit each company in rotation and he drilled, trained and lectured the men on company parades. He was in the area during the preparation for the attack on Ballytrain Barracks and was present at the attack.

The plans for the attack on Ballytrain Barracks were made and perfected by the Monaghan Brigade staff. Eoin O'Duffy, Dan Hogan and a number of other brigade and battalion officers took part in working out the details. The planning of this operation was gone into in the most minute detail. An extensive plan of road blocking was ordered all over the County.

Monaghan to prevent the arrival of reinforcements for the R.I.C. garrison at Ballytrain during the course of the attack. The plans were all worked out not alone as far as the positions in the vicinity of the barrack from which the attack was to be launched, but also the various security measures to prevent surprise such as road blocking, etc. This work had all been done before O'Malley was informed of our plans.

On the night of the attack Ernie O'Malley and myself travelled by cycle from Monaghan town to Ballytrain. We started some time earlier than the other local men as we wanted to be in the vicinity of the barracks before the arrival of the others so that we could be sure that everything was in order and that nothing unusual had happened to cause any upset to our plans. The other men who were mobilised to take part in the actual attack from Monaghan town travelled to the operation by motor cars or cycles. The Clones men and men from all the other districts did ditto.

This attack which has been since known as the Ballytrain attack was not carried out in the village of Ballytrain. The attacked barracks was situated at a crossroad in a village named Shantonagh about one and a half miles from Ballytrain. The barrack was situated at a crossroad on a main road leading from Carrickmacross to Clones, and it faced a road leading to Castleblayney which abutted at right angles on to the main road. The barrack was a two-storey building with a halldoor in the centre and two large rooms facing the street. Opposite the halldoor was a stairway to the upper floor. Adjoining the barrack on the Clones side was a lock-up store belonging to the Mitchel family with a gate-way entrance alongside the barrack gable which led to the yard at the rere of the store. This store was also a two-storey building and had a front doorway leading into the building from the street and shuttered windows upstairs on the front of the

house. It was in this store on the upstairs floor over the gateway leading into the backyard that the explosives for mining the barracks gable wall were placed. On the opposite side of the road from the barrack, but not directly opposite the barrack was Mitchel's shop. We took possession of this shop, which was an extensive building. The owners of these premises, who lived in, were Unionists. We had to take forcible possession and convey the inmates to the rere where they were kept in perfect safety both as far as affected our security against them alarming the police and their own wellbeing during the attack.

The three principal positions for the attack were:

No. 1 - Mitchel's shop, where I and about five others took up positions armed with rifles at the upstairs windows of the premises, where we could control the front of the barracks with our fire and cover the movements of the men in and out of Mitchel's lock-up store, from where the barrack gable was being mined. In the No. 2 post - Mitchel's lock-up store - Dan Hogan was, I presume, in charge, as his principal responsibility was the successful mining of the barrack gable. He was, however, moving in and out of the various posts before the attack actually commenced. No. 3 position was at the rere of the barrack premises where Ernie O'Malley and a number of men were posted to prevent any attempt by the police to evacuate by the rere. The post office, a short distance from the barrack on the same side of the street, was occupied and used by Eoin O'Duffy as a sort of command headquarters, and from there he coördinated and directed the attack.

When all were in position in the three principal posts I and my men opened an attack with rifle fire on the front of the barrack. The men at the barrack gable commenced to set the explosives. When the mine was laid and the fuse lit, the men in this post had to evacuate the building to the rere.

When the mine exploded the arched gateway at the gable of the barrack collapsed with the gable wall and the upstairs floors and on each side the gable dropped down and the lower end of the floors were resting on a heap of rubble in the arched gateway. This rubble was part of the gable wall and part of the store roof of Mitchel's lockup store.

After the explosion there was complete silence in the barracks and we all immediately rushed into the upstairs portion of the barracks by climbing up the inclined upstairs floor from the gateway. We found the police constables huddled in a corner against the opposite gable. Apparently they knew we were exploding a mine at the opposite gable and got as far away as possible from it. Their rifles were neatly placed against the wall. We found the sergeant near the bottom of the stairs covered with a rubble of laths and plaster, etc. None of the police was seriously wounded; superficial cuts and bruises were all the damage suffered. They were, however, suffering from the shock effects of the explosion.

We captured all the garrison's rifles and revolvers and a supply of ammunition. We also captured three or four hand grenades of a most unusual pattern. Those grenades were much smaller than the Mills hand grenade - about the size of a hen egg and very dark in colour. On one end of the grenade was a striker pin which in the process of firing should be hit hard against a hard substance to ignite the fuse and then thrown. The police were trained to hit the striker pin of the grenade against the heel of their boots. A number of these grenades were thrown out by the police during the attack and were found on the roadway the next morning. On examination it was found that no detonators were fitted in the grenades before they were fired out, and they all failed to explode.

In the general raid for arms in September 1920, I concentrated on a district named Milltown and its vicinity which is situated near Monaghan town. This area was Unionist and hostile to us. It was known to us that many of the inhabitants had possession of firearms including rifles. I had charge of a party of the Monaghan town Company in the raiding of houses in this district, which was carried out simultaneously with similar raids all over the country.

I cannot now remember exactly how much arms we got in this raid. I think we got, between rifles and shotguns, seven weapons and about 2 revolvers. We met no active opposition in any of the ten houses we visited.

Sinn Féin Courts:

Sinn Féin Courts were set up and were functioning in my Battalion area. I had no active association with the courts but Volunteers were made available to assist at the courts in the capacity of policemen to enforce the courts' decrees, making arrests when necessary and collecting fines. I know of one instance in which a prominent Unionist solicitor appeared representing a client on a case which was tried at a Sinn Féin Court held in St. Joseph's Hall - Monaghan. I cannot now remember the solicitor's name. His attendance on this case at the time occasioned some uneasiness, as it was felt that he might be tempted to give the British authorities information about the persons constituting the Court etc., but he didn't.

Belfast Boycott activities:

As part of the campaign to enforce a trade boycott on Belfast produced goods, we decided to hold up a goods train at Glasslough at a level-crossing on the Monaghan side of the town. This particular train carried mails from Belfast to various places scattered over a wide district in south Ulster and the west of Ireland.

We closed the gates at the level-crossing against the train, and we were engaged in lifting a length of rail on the Monaghan side of the closed gates when the train arrived and halted at the closed gates. We boarded the engine and took the driver and the fireman from the train and put them into the gatekeepers cottage as prisoners until we had finished with the train. We then searched the train from end to end and took all mails and all goods invoices from the train. We then opened a number of the waggons which contained goods and we sprinkled those waggons and the rest of the train with petrol and set the train on fire. We then put the train in motion, believing that the moving train would burn out more quickly than if stationary. We were also hoping that the burned wreckage of the train would block the railway line near Monaghan town. The train in fact only travelled about a mile and a half from where it was set on fire to where it stopped.

We censored all the mails, and before reposting we procured a rubber stamp bearing the inscription "Censored by the I.R.A." which we used on each letter.

I took part with other officers in the examination of the letters and the invoices from the train. The invoices showed that a number of traders who had got

previous warning against dealing with Belfast firms had disregarded the warning. In this respect, one of the surprises we got was an invoice for drapery goods from a Belfast firm on the boycott list to the Chairman of the Boycott Committee in Monaghan town. This man's case was taken to the Sinn Féin Court and he had, as a consequence, to pay a substantial fine. This particular case received wide local publicity and its' sequel provided an effective warning to others who were inclined to ignore the boycott regulations.

From the time the Belfast boycott was first imposed we maintained a constant watch on all conveyances using the public roads and all vans, carts, etc. found delivering Belfast goods such as bread, meal, flour or feeding stuffs were destroyed. In all those boycott raids all goods had to be destroyed, otherwise the impression could be created that the I.R.A. were converting these proceeds to their own personal use.

There were several large firms with business headquarters in Monaghan town who had a big turn-over from all north Monaghan districts and, who for years specialised in selling Belfast goods. We had to keep a strict watch on these firms and maintain a constant check on their deliveries, and where we found them abusing the boycott regulations we destroyed the goods. We were also able to influence the various country retail shops to refuse to stock goods from firms who dealt with Belfast houses.

Roslea reprisals:

As a result of the burning of a number of Catholic houses in Roslea by B/Specials, it was decided at an I.R.A. conference, presided over by Owen O'Duffy and

attended by all Company officers in north Monaghan, that reprisals for the burning of Catholic houses should be carried out. The decision arrived at at this conference was that reprisals were to be carried out at Roslea and also at Scotstown and Smithboro. Smithboro was in my Battalion area and the carrying out of Smithboro reprisal was to be my special responsibility and involved the burning of the house of a Unionist family named McLean. All the above reprisals were planned to take place simultaneously. The burnings for this particular night are since known as the Roslea reprisals. Each of the three districts selected for reprisals contained large Unionist populations where all young Unionists were armed and trained in the use of arms.

My information about the McLean family was that there were at least four brothers living at home and that a few of them had been officers in the British Army in the 1914-18 war. Some of them, I had been informed, had been seen parading on the local roads armed and carrying out their duties as members of the B/Special Constabulary. The McLean family were extensive farmers and dealt in horses in a big way.

Their residence was a large two storey house which was approached from the county road by an avenue which passed the front of the house and led into a large square yard situated at the rear of the dwellinghouse. This yard was entered along one gable of the residence and was fitted with a large high gate which was always securely locked at night. There was a range of outhouses on two sides of this yard. On the third side was a high wall and the back of the residence made up the fourth side. At

one gable of the residence, and separated from the residence by the gate leading into the yard, was a large barn. The under portion of this barn was used as stables and the upper portion as a hay loft. The entrance to this building was from the avenue. All the other outbuildings could only be entered from inside the yard and the locked gate prevented us getting into this yard.

For this operation I mobilised men from Smithboro Company, Corcahan and Three Mile House Companies. Our plans visualised the possibility of getting in to the dwellinghouse quietly and then forcing the surrender of the arms before we burned it. For the burning part we had a horse and cart conveying the petrol to the scene of the attack.

After our arrival at McLean's around about 1 a.m., and when our men were all posted in positions covering the front and sides of the house and surrounding the yard and outbuildings at the sides and rear, Paddy McCarron and I approached the hall door. We knocked and received no reply. We decided then to let out all the horses from their stalls in the ground floor of the large stall. The horses when released immediately galloped down the avenue and scattered across the lawn and grounds near the house. I then returned with McCarron to the front of the house and stood behind an ornamental shrub. I then noticed that what appeared to be a small oil lamp had been lighted in a centre room upstairs. The window showing this light was curtained and I could only dimly see the reflection of the light.

I called on the inmates again to open the door, or if not we would force the door open. The inmates

replied to this threat with a volley of shots from various upstairs windows. We immediately took whatever cover the grass margin of the avenue afforded and we replied to the fire from the house. After our first volley the lamp was extinguished. I called on some of the men from one of the gables to come to the front with their shotguns and to keep firing on the windows. The defenders of the house maintained a constant heavy fire from both the front and gable windows for about 30 minutes. It became evident to us that the defenders had an inexhaustible supply of ammunition and that we could not force an entry into the dwellinghouse. We then withdrew to the gable side of the house facing the stables. We got up on the hay loft and saturated the bedding we found there with the contents of the petrol tins which proved to be mostly paraffin oil. We set fire to the loft and retired to the main road to await the result of the fire. Unfortunately, in lighting the material on the loft we forgot to open the windows and the fire got suffocated for the want of air and smothered itself.

When we realised our failure to set fire to the loft, with the involvement of the other outbuildings and the possibility of the dwellinghouse also becoming alight, we decided that we were not able to complete the attempt against such strong well-armed opposition protected by what could be described as a veritable stronghold.

The area surrounding McLean's house was a Unionist stronghold. When the shooting started at McLean's we soon heard shooting at various other points in the district. This shooting was part of an arranged defence plan to give the alarm to other Unionist houses. In some Unionist districts the

church bells were rung if attacks were made in the district to give a general alarm and alert all armed Unionists.

The Rescue of Comdt. Mat Fitzpatrick:

Comdt. Fitzpatrick wounded in Roslea during an attack on a Unionist house on the night of the Roslea reprisals. Some weeks later he was raided for by British Forces and was captured in the private house where he was being nursed and treated for his wounds. Immediately after his capture he was taken into Monaghan County Infirmary. As his condition was so serious that he was considered unfit to be removed to Belfast, on his arrival in the Infirmary a guard from the King's Royal Rifles was placed over him to prevent his escape or rescue. When Fitzpatrick was captured we knew that he would be removed to Belfast for trial as soon as his medical condition permitted and that ample evidence would be available to sentence him to the death penalty. Dr. Con Ward was in close touch with the Infirmary and friendly with the matron. A few weeks after Fitzpatrick's capture he got to know that Fitzpatrick was to be removed within a few days to Belfast where he was to be put on trial. Prior to this we had been perfecting plans for his rescue. Dr. Ward's information hastened matters and we had to conclude our plans and put them into immediate operation.

On the night of the rescue the following mobilised and took part: - Dan Hogan, Officer in charge, John McCarville, Paddy McCarron, James Flynn and myself from Monaghan; Jim O'Donohue and Pat Monaghan Aghabog; John McGonnell, Joseph McCarville, John McKenna, James Winters, Clones; Paddy McKenna,

Scotstown; Patrick McCrory, Tyholland; Frank Tummins Wattlebridge. In addition to above there were a few others who acted as car drivers and stretcher bearers.

The rescue party travelled by cars to within a half mile of Monaghan. The three cars used had been commandeered. We parked the cars at a place named Milltown. We then took off our boots and proceeded in our stockinged feet along the public road into the hospital grounds. The men in charge of the cars got orders to move the cars in closer to the hospital when they considered we had time to have reached the hospital grounds.

Men were also mobilised at Milltown and at various other points along our planned line of retreat from Monaghan to cut down trees and block the roads after the rescue party had passed through on the return journey. We also blocked roads we did not use leading in the direction of the mountains north of the town with light trees to give the British the idea that we had travelled in that direction.

We entered the hospital buildings through the kitchen door opening from the hospital grounds. The outside, leading into the kitchen, and an inside door leading from the kitchen into the hospital proper were left unlocked but shut on that night by previous arrangements. When we arrived in the kitchen we silently opened the inner door a little so that we could see the sentry on duty. His post was in a stone flagged corridor leading from the kitchen to the room used as a guardroom down stairs and to the stairway leading to the ward upstairs where Fitzpatrick was an inmate. It was the sentry's custom to march on his beat to and fro in this corridor. We had planned to wait at the inner kitchen door until the sentry had turned

to march back from us when we would rush out and disarm him. We waited for what we considered a considerable time to see or hear the sentry and we failed to locate him.

My part in the rescue was that Frank Tummins and I were to rush up the stairs to the ward where Fitzpatrick was in bed to overpower the soldier who we knew was on duty there. The rushing of the sentry, the overpowering of the soldiers in the guardroom and the disarming of the soldier on duty in the ward were to be carried out simultaneously.

We were all puzzled by the absence of the sentry from the passageway. We started to carefully investigate the position on the ground floor when we found ^{the sentry} /asleep on a chair underneath the stairway with his rifle resting between his knees. Dan Hogan went up and disarmed the sleeping sentry who, in the scare of his sudden awakening and disarming, gave a loud roar or shout. At the disarming of the sentry Tummins and I rushed up the stairway towards Fitzpatrick's ward. When we were about half way up we heard shots from the direction of the guardroom below and those shots alarmed the soldier on duty in the ward. The soldier came to the ward door with his rifle in his hands when we were about three steps from the landing at the door of the ward. I covered him when he appeared at the door with my revolver. The soldier quickly slipped back into the ward and shut the door against us. As I approached the door to open it a number of shots were fired through the door from within. I shouted to our men downstairs to send us up the sentry to be used as a screen to cover our entry to the ward. By this time the sentry and the men in the guardroom had been disarmed and, in answer to my shouted request several soldiers were

rushed up the stairs and we forced them through the ward door. The soldier on duty in the ward then surrendered his rifle.

We found Fitzpatrick in bed on the right hand side of the ward - about five beds from the doorway. I shouted to him to get up and, to my surprise, he stood up dressed in a long night shirt and jumped from bed to bed towards the door. He was asked who had fired the shots and he said: "It was not the soldier. It was that man there", pointing to a man in a bed directly opposite where he was lying. Dan Hogan went to the man indicated and pulled him out of the bed but could not find any revolver in it. Fitzpatrick then said: "That man got up and fired the revolver through the door and then took the revolver back into bed with him." Hogan then pulled the mattress from the bed and found the revolver inside it.

I am a bit confused as to what happened next as I did not again see Fitzpatrick until I saw him sitting in a car out at Milltown. However, a bit of a rumpus started in the ward over the man who had fired at us through the door. At one time it looked as if the man would likely be shot. Someone, however, suggested that as he was a patient in the hospital he should not be molested.

Jim O'Donoghue and I, and possibly some of the others, collected the rifles and we carried them out of the hospital. Someone on leaving the grounds before us closed half of the gate and Jim O'Donoghue, in rushing out with a number of rifles in his arms, collided with the closed half gate and got a bad fall and scattered the rifles about in the darkness. O'Donoghue's injury and the collecting of the rifles from the ground in the darkness caused a little delay.

When we arrived at where the cars were waiting I got into the third and last car leaving from Milltown. Paddy McCarron, who was sitting beside me in the car, complained of being thirsty, and when I looked at him I saw he looked very pale. He then informed me that he was wounded in the arm during the shooting in the guardroom. I noticed that his hand was covered with blood which had run down his sleeve from his upper arm. This was the first indication I got that any of our men had been wounded.

We took the back roads in our retreat until we passed through Tyholland and then through Castleshane. As per previous instructions I got off the car between Tyholland and Castleshane, as it was part of my duties for this operation to ensure that if the military started out in pursuit on our line of retreat that I should delay them by having my men ready in this area to block the roads.

The military and police who set out to recapture Fitzpatrick went north in the direction of the mountains.

The cars after I had left them proceeded to Annyalla to a pre-arranged place at Tassan, where Fitzpatrick and McCarron were kept for medical attention and treatment. I did not see Fitzpatrick for a few days after the rescue as visiting him was considered dangerous to his safety. The car in which McCarron and I travelled from Monaghan was abandoned in Rockcorry area, and when it was found there blood stains were seen on the upholstery. The military and police were apprised of this which had the effect of a thorough search being made in Rockcorry district for wounded men and the searchers did not touch Annyalla area.

When I saw Fitzpatrick again I found that Dr. Nolan of Ballybay was attending him and McCarron was also under his care. I know that from the time of his rescue up to the Truce in July 1921, he was continually being shifted from place to place as a safety measure against recapture.

Stranooden (Corcaghan) ambush:

Stranooden R.I.C. barracks is situated about six miles from Monaghan town and about half a mile from Corcaghan church. There is a public house directly opposite the church which the Tans visited for their drinks at night. Three or four of the Tans from the barracks were very active in raiding and searching the houses in this district. Those raids were carried out in an unofficial and blackguardly manner. The purpose of those raids was to lift anything of value found in the houses; even such things as eggs and foodstuffs were removed during raids. When I heard of those activities I decided to put a stop to them. I went into the district to get to know as much as possible about the activities and movements of the Tans and to make plans for an attack on them.

On the night of the attack we took up position at the creamery cross which is midway between the barracks and the public house at approximately 10.30 p.m. on the 20th January 1921. There was a full moon at the time but the sky was overcast with dark clouds and there were alternative periods of bright moonlight and darkness, caused by the passage clouds temporarily obscuring the moon's light.

When we took up position we knew that a number of Tans were drinking in the pub and we stationed a scout in the village whose orders were to rush us a warning by running across fields as soon as the Tans left the pub.

for the barracks. We were only in the position a short time when the scout arrived with a warning of the approach of Tans. In a short time we heard a man's approaching footsteps and in the moon's light I recognised him as a Constable McKeever who had been previously stationed in Monaghan and whose attitude was friendly towards the I.R.A. We let him pass. I heard afterwards that McKeever was sent from the barracks to the pub to get the Tans to return to the barracks. The scout was sent back again to watch and in a short time he again returned stating that the Tans were coming. I gave instructions to the men that no person was to fire until I gave the order. We heard footsteps approaching the cross and, as the moon was clear of clouds, we saw the local parish priest and his housekeeper coming from the direction of the Parochial House for a walk. The Tans had previously threatened the Parish priest and he took his housekeeper with him as companion on his walks. After this I did not send the scout back to the pub but waited the arrival of the Tans as we knew that they must pass our way returning to the Barracks. We waited for a long time and then we heard footsteps coming. I saw the bulk of three men walking together and I also saw the reflection of the moonlight on the glazed peak of a policeman's cap which one man was wearing. All the men were wearing raincoats and only one was wearing a police cap. We opened fire on them with shotguns and rifle and the three men dropped on the road. We searched them and got an automatic pistol and a small revolver on the men. We cleared off then and dumped our arms.

Carrickmacross Barracks attack - 30th April 1921:

On the 30th April 1921, I got to know that an attack was planned on Carrickmacross R.I.C. Barracks. I went along to Corduff on the night previous to the attack and

there I met P.J. O'Daly. O'Daly was O/C Carrickmacross Battn. and Vice O/C of the Brigade. After meeting O'Daly, he and I examined some shotgun cartridges which it was proposed to use in the attack and we found the stuff all swollen and unfit for use. We also examined a quantity of gelignite which it was planned to use in the attack. We found the gelignite serviceable

On the night of the attack it was arranged that three positions should be occupied: No. 1 - O'Hagan's pub on the opposite side of the street to control the door and windows on the front of the barrack; No. 2 position was Hanna's, on the same side of the street as the barrack, which could enfilade the street opposite the barrack door to prevent the police escaping from the barrack on to the street or to get on the street for offensive action against our positions; the 3rd position was Daly's hardware shop which adjoined the barrack gable. It was from this position that the explosives to mine the barrack wall were to be used. The back of the barracks was enclosed by a high wall and required no attention from us as any of the police getting out at the back would have to come on to the main street through an entry at the gable of the barrack. It was arranged that men from the Carrickmacross Company would be the first to enter Daly's premises and take control of the shop staff - staff who lived and slept on the premises.

When the local Company took possession of Daly's, they got the staff to move into a position in the building where they would be safe and then the main attacking party moved into the building with the explosives. As far as I can remember both P.J. O'Daly and the late John Connolly, both Civil Engineers, were responsible for the laying of the explosives

against the barrack gable. The explosives were packed into a fire place and also on shelves adjoining the fire place on the ground floor of Daly's shop. This fire place was back to back with a fire place in the day room of the barrack and it was considered the weakest part of the gable wall. A man named Michael Garvey and I went up to an upstairs room at the top of the house equipped with petrol tins and bottles of petrol which we sprinkled on each room adjoining the barrack gable. Whilst we were upstairs, although there was little or no noise made in taking over Daly's, a policeman came from the front of the barrack and went in the direction of Daly's shop to have a look in on window. Fire was opened on this man from O'Hagan's position. This firing started the attack as the police in the barrack replied to the fire. One unpleasant feature of the firing from our point of view was that some of the bullets fired at the barrack from O'Hagan's came in through the windows on Daly's shop.

One of the principal defence positions at the barrack was a sandbagged machine gun post on a flat roof over the hallway leading into the barrack. The men to work the machine gun at this post could get to and from the post through a first floor window. When the firing first started, the machine gunners did not apparently get into their position for some time as there was a noticeable delay before the machine gun or guns got into action.

In about 20 minutes after the start of the firing, Dan Hogan, who was in charge downstairs, shouted up to us "Get down as quick as possible as the fuses are lit". We lost no time in getting down and we joined all the men from the downstairs position at the rear of Daly's premises awaiting the explosion to take place. It

was about this time that we heard the machine gun first come into action. This gun, operating from its' position projecting out in front of the barrack, controlled the main street in both directions fronting the barrack. It also controlled our post in O'Hagan's pub on the opposite side of the street.

We waited for some time at the rear of Daly's before we realised that our mine at the barrack gable was a failure and that something had gone wrong. We could only make conjectures as to what mistake was made in placing the explosives.

It was the next day we got to know the cause of the failure of the mine. We heard from R.I.C. sources that when they investigated the matter they found that after the gelignite was placed in position, with detonators and fuse attached, the material used to pack the explosives against the barrack gable was clumsily dropped into position in such a manner as to pull the fuses from the detonators. It can readily be understood how this could happen as this had to be done under candle light under poor supervision and in a hurried manner.

The opinion of the police on our methods of fixing the explosives to the barrack wall and the amount of explosives used was, that although the barrack was one of the largest in Co. Monaghan the charge was sufficient to destroy the barrack and adjoining houses. The garrison in the barrack numbered twenty-five men.

This brings my narrative up to the Truce in 1921. I must apologise for a bad memory which renders it rather difficult to give proper detailed evidence about events of over thirty years ago. When I was

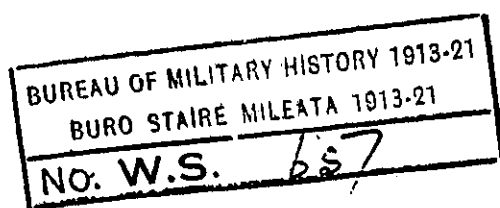
asked by Mr. John McCoy to give my evidence to the Bureau of Military History, I went down to Co. Monaghan for about ten days and met people there who, to some extent, helped me to revive past memories.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Witness: _____

Date: _____



APPENDIX.



Photograph No. 1: It shows "Ballytrain" R.I.C. barracks as it looks now. The barracks is on the left hand side of the photograph and Mitchel's lock-up shop - No. 2 post - extends from the left-hand side of the archway in the centre of the building to the gable of the premises on the right-hand side of photograph. The mine was placed in the barrack gable, in the room inside the window seen over the gateway.



Photograph No. 2: Another view of the barrack and Mitchel's lock-up store. On the right of this photograph can be seen a portion of a lean-to shed attached to Mitchel's shop - No. 1 post - on the opposite side of the road from the barrack.



Photograph No. 3: Mitchel's shop - No. 1 post - On the right of this photograph can be seen the lean-to shed which is partly visible in photograph No. 2