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ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21
No. W.S. 674

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 674.....

Witness

Mr. J. Togher,
7 Francis Street,
Galway.

Identity.

I.R.A. Intelligence Officer,
Galway, 1917-1921.

Subject.

I.R.A. Intelligence work, Galway City,
1917-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. S.1970.....

Form B.S.M. 2

C O N T E N T S.

Intelligence work.

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Strength and distribution
of enemy forces in Galway City.

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ORIGINAL

Statement by J. Togher,

No. W.S. 674

7, St. Francis Street, Galway.

I joined the Volunteers in 1917 but worked under cover as far as possible till the Truce in 1921.

As I was employed in the Post Office I copied and nearly always deciphered enemy ciphers. The interception of correspondence for the enemy was also part of my work. Any information from these or any other sources, was passed to the Brigade O.C. (Seamus Murphy up to September, 1920), direct.

Amongst others I found some anonymous letters at different times addressed to R.I.C. Galway, giving information about people and Volunteers in the Barna and Spiddal area. The letters I gave to Micheál Droighneain (then O.C. in that area). I was given to understand later that they were written by - Joyce, a teacher in Barna. I believe appropriate action was taken.

As a result of interceptions and from soldiers working for me in Renmore, I could, in many cases give enemy movements some time ahead.

On September 7th 1920 - Krumm a Tan driver attached to the R.I.C. was shot whilst being disarmed at Galway Railway Station. One Volunteer was shot dead and another wounded as a result of this encounter. That night and the following morning in the early hours, enemy forces shot Seamus Quirke (a well known Volunteer) dead, and wounded some others, who were lucky enough to escape alive. The Sinn Fein hall was burned to the ground and the office of the "Galway Express" (a Sinn Fein paper) was bombed and burned.

As from September 8th '20 practically all known officers and Volunteers were "on the run" and the Battalion ceased to function. In the circumstances I decided to form a new Unit. There were either 13 or 16 members at first, but as we began to find the right people we got stronger. We were badly hampered at first as the men who knew where arms were dumped could not be contacted and our own supply was negligible. Further, our training in arms and military work in general was scanty. However, we kept up Intelligence work, burned military stores, spread false information, e.g. impending attacks by I.R.A., strangers seen in town, etc. all for the purpose of using enemy force in town, while the columns outside (Mayo and Clare) were getting on with the real work.

I was arrested in November, 1920, in a general daylight raid just after "Bloody Sunday". There were a hundred or more arrested at that time, but as far as our Unit was concerned, I believe there weren't more than four taken in. Three active members and myself were released after about 7 days.

During my interrogation, I noticed the enemy seemed to have a mass of information, most of it correct, as to men and formations and happenings. Some of their stuff was "stale". The British Intelligence Officer was Captain Harrison of the K.R.R., I believe. I thought at first my arrest was just one of many, but the form my interrogation took led me to think otherwise. Harrison (known as Splendid) had telegraph forms torn up and placed in a pocket book, which he produced. When I denied

having worked on their ciphers. The bluff didn't work.

Sometime about the end of '20 or early in '21 I went to Dublin and got in touch with G.H.Q. at Engineers Union Hall, in, I think, Gardiner Street or Place. I saw the D.O. and later Ginger O'Connell in U.C.D. I got all the advice and assistance they could give but arms or ammunition were not available.

About this time Igoe arrived in Galway on a visit. He was well guarded. We decided to shoot Igoe as I had been told in G.H.Q. he was badly wanted. I sent out immediately to Castlegar, the nearest unit with arms, asking for revolvers and bombs. Unfortunately they were not in the spot and when the messenger returned Igoe had left.

All this time of course there were civilians working as agents in different hotels and the County Club which was a social centre for some Auxiliaries and Military Officers. The County Club was frequented by Captain P.W. Keating who was O.C. Forting (Co-ordination group for R.I.C. Auxiliary and Military Intelligence) with his Headquarters at Dominick Street. Contact was maintained with Keating through an ex-British Officer who was working for us. (Ex Captain Brennan R.A.O.C. later of Soldiers and Sailors Trust, Dublin).

I found through an agent in his bank that Keating was much overdrawn and I thought we might buy some information from him (principally the names of Fr. Griffin's murderers). From my information re his general open conversation in the club, he was prepared to sell. However, I was warned, as a

result of one of his private conversations it was a trap. Incidentally Padraig Fahy (Intelligence Officer, No. 2 Brigade) and myself investigated the Fr. Griffin Murder but got no definite information bearing on it.

I had at this stage the home addresses of most of the Auxiliary Company in Galway. All S.S. Agents worked under numbers. The general distribution of enemy was as follows:-

Tans and R.I.C. at Eglinton Street, Dominick Street,
The Docks, Salthill.

Auxiliaries at Lenaboy, Taylors Hill and Retreat
D. Company Salthill.

Army -
Battalion of 4th Worcester at Workhouse (Now Central
Hospital

17th Lancers at Earls Island

Depot of Connaught Rangers, Tanks, Armed Cars and
general mixed Infantry at Renmore Barracks.

In addition houses in different streets were taken over and occupied by Tans.

The total enemy armed forces in the town area at that time would approximate 2000.

Signed: _____

(J. Togher).

Witness: _____

(Sean Brennan), Comd't.

18th April 1952.

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