

W.S. 792
ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21
NO. W.S. 792

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COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 792

Witness

Tadg O'Sullivan,
"Maryville",
Skibbereen,
Co. Cork.

Identity.

Q.M. 1st (Bandon) Battalion, Cork III Brigade;
Q.M. Cork III Brigade and Brigade Column.

Subject.

Irish Volunteer activities, North-West Cork,
1915-1922.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No...S.1769.....

Form B.S.M. 2

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FROM THE NOTEBOOK
OF
TADG O'SULLIVAN,
BRIGADE QUARTERMASTER, CORK 111 BRIGADE, AND
QUARTERMASTER, BRIGADE FLYING COLUMN.

1916 PERIOD.

Joined the Volunteers when E. Blythe was organising in 1915. Meetings by night with J. Colbert, Con Mullane, M. Carroll Mullane, Pat Connell. Not out in 1916. Blythe was arrested the morning after at 4 o'clock from J. Ahern's, Athea, the house I was staying in.

31ST APRIL, 1916 TO 31ST MARCH, 1917.

Joined the I.R.B., being sworn in by M. Griffin, Listowel. Attending weekly parades. Parade for Con Colbert and I said the Rosary in Irish for the repose of his soul, which was answered by over 300 people. Tar barrel procession when Cosgrave was elected, as well as to get shopkeepers to light up their houses. Organising and making preparation for the reception of Countess Markievicz when she came down to a Feis and she lectured the Volunteers that night. Attended different demonstrations in Glen, Tarbert, Listowel, addressed by Austin Stack, L. Ginnell and Blythe.

1ST APRIL, 1917 TO 31ST MARCH, 1918.

Attending parades weekly as well as meeting every

1st April, 1917 to 31st March, 1918 (Contd.)

night by a number of Volunteers. Attended parades in Abbeyfeale, Glen, Listowel, Knocknagoshel. Organised with others for a military funeral for Volunteer Emmett Leahy. Ordered 5 dozen Volunteer Hats from Fitzgerald's, Cork, and sent them on to Athea.

1ST APRIL, 1918 TO 31ST MARCH, 1919.

Weekly parades. Burning charcoal, mixing with saltpetre and sulphur and making powder and drying same at Creamery. (Dr. Cullinane, Clonakilty, was mixing stuff with me). Filled cartridges with buckshot and tested the newly made powder with shotguns and door in Crook's fields, which proved to be successful.

Travelled to Skibbereen three times for gelignite and detonators which I got from Neilus Connolly, he being Battalion Commander then, and got them back safe to Timoleague. Cycled from Skibbereen at 4 o'clock in the morning. Exchanged boxes of powder with Barryroe Company for other war material.

Attended Brigade Convention in Caheragh with Tom Hales, who lectured the Volunteers on their duty as soldiers, as well as others.

Was in different Companies with Frank Thornton organising the I.R.B. and getting the Constitution read to them and swearing in members. Attending monthly

1st April, 1918 to 31st March, 1919 (Contd.)

centre meetings of the I.R.B. Being appointed Treasurer of the 1st Bandon Battalion district circle.

Collecting information daily and forwarding it to Seán Hales.

Attended meeting in Skibbereen and accompanied Mick Collins and others to Leap to a meeting.

Collecting steel and making Croppy Pikes.

1ST APRIL, 1919 TO 31ST MARCH, 1920.

Sleeping out but not on the run. Making bombs with Company Volunteers and collecting war material for attack on enemy. Attack on Timoleague police barracks of February, 1920. Preparing for same for a month before. Attending Battalion H.Q. 2 nights weekly with information collected. Preparing the charge and getting war material in readiness for other Companies. In charge of different sections the night of the attack and getting them in touch with operations.

Military raided for me after the attack but not at home.

Went on the run and organised attacks with C. Hurley, Battalion O.C. (R.I.P.), Con Crowley, P. Crowley, Con Murphy (R.I.P.), J. O'Driscoll to ambush police in different roads in district.

1st April, 1919 to 31st March, 1920. (Contd.)

Armed raid on mail car in Bandon-Kilbrittain road four times, seized letter and got information about different parties friendly with enemy, as well as other useful information. Attended Battalion Council meeting when appointed Battalion Quartermaster (20th March, 1920) and travelled to the different Companies of Battalion to inspect arms, etc., as well as seeing that men lying in ambush in the district were to be billeted and fed. Visited each Company with C. Hurley in Battalion and administered Volunteer Oath to each man. Held up by military in Timoleague road with C. Hurley and got away.

Collected crosscuts and sledges for blocking of roads; getting ladders and other articles for demolishing Courtmacsherry Police Barracks at Easter, 1920. Ordered Seán O'Brien out of district for giving information about shooting of policeman in Kilbrittain. Notifying P.P. re sermons. Notifying all shopkeepers in Timoleague not to supply goods to police. Getting O'Mahony tarred for associating with R.I.C. Arrest, trial of O'Mahony for taking notes in shorthand of sermons re Volunteers and sending them on to press.

1ST APRIL, 1920 TO 31ST MARCH, 1921.

Responsible for arms, ammunition, collecting, cleaning, dumping and keeping in repair of same.

1st April, 1920 to 31st March, 1921 (Contd.)

Awaiting ambush in the Clonakilty-Timoleague vicinity for 3 days from 6 o'clock in the morning to 4 o'clock in the evening. Lislevane road one day from 5 o'clock until 2 o'clock with C. Hurley, Vice Commandant, C. Crowley, J. O'Driscoll, Con Murphy and some others (April, 1920). Prepared ambush in Newcestown 22/6/1920 (Liam Deasy and C. Hurley in charge). Arrest, trial at Newcestown and sentences of 6 men for stealing blankets, whiskey and other goods in Bandon. Arrest, trial and sentence of death on spy, Crowley, in Cross Pound, with Tom Hales, Dick Barrett, Chas. Hurley. Took a number of arms across from Clogagh for the Killowen ambush, May, 1920. C. Hurley, L. Deasy in charge. Arrest, trial and sentence of death on spy, Dwyer, after Brinny ambush for giving information which led to the death of Tim Fitzgerald, with C. Hurley, Liam Deasy, C. Crowley.

Ambush in Brinny from 4 o'clock in the morning until 3 o'clock. Seán Hales in charge, 29/8/1920. Prepared ambush in Kilpatrick 28/8/1920. Prepared repeated ambush in Kilpatrick 28/8/1920; Liam Deasy, Chas. Hurley in charge.

Captured at Kinsale Bridge on early morning of 15/8/1920, military being in ambush, I being going on to a meeting to the East of Kinsale, I having a wire found in my possession from Diarmuid Lynch, U.S.A., that he was to resign his T.D. for the district. I was held

1st April, 1920 to 31st March, 1921 (Contd.)

there until 4 o'clock in the evening and brought to Bandon Barracks and beaten several times. In fact, there is a mark on my nose yet. I was held for two nights, being taken out and beaten each night. I was taken out the Innishannon road about 1½ miles by a large number of military. He ordered his men to halt. Had a consultation with others - Officers. He ordered the men to extend so many paces along the road. I was then told to proceed. The first opportunity I availed of I got in over the fence and cleared for the river. I remained there until it got bright and saw that they were cleared away. I then walked over six miles before I could get a safe house.

Met Liam Deasy and Mick Herlihy to shoot policeman who was after murdering Clancy in North Cork. Called at the house that his box was booked for to Skibbereen. He did not turn up.

Went back from Skibbereen to Kilbrittain for Training Camp which held for a week.

Ambush in Newcestown 9/10/1920. Prepared ambush in Brinny 30/11/1920. Military attack Column Quarry Cross, 20/1/1921. Prepared ambush Mawbeg and Carhue, June, 20th, 1921. Two attacks Bandon Military Barracks, 19/2/1921. Prepared ambush for military at Ballinadee. Prepared ambush at Shippool, 17/3/1921. Fight at Crossbarry, 19/3/1921. Attacked by military in preparing

1st April, 1920 to 31st March, 1921 (Contd.)

to attack Ross Police Barracks, 2/2/1921. Attack at Innishannon 19/2/1921. Appointed Brigade Quartermaster March, 1920. Shifting of arms from Cross Pound to Kilbrittain. Attacked by military at Cristlerana (Crossnalanbh) where 4 men were killed.

Getting two men to proceed to inform C. Hurley, Brigade O.C., of the attack at Crossbarry, who were captured. Chas. Hurley was shot on that morning. Blowing up Police Barracks and Travers' residence, Timoleague.

Awaiting ambush Inchy Bridge, July 1920.

On the two attacks on the Kilbrittain Police Barracks being one of the men with Donal Flynn, Dan Ahern and Mick Crowley to charge same. Seized mails from Bandon to Kilbrittain 4 times in succession with Charley Hurley, M. O'Neill and Jim Mahony.

1ST APRIL, 1921 TO 11TH JULY, 1921.

Operating with Flying Column and Brigade Officers in prepared ambush in Caheragh, Bantry road. Column disbanded in sections for sniping at different posts. Going round picking men from different Companies in Battalion for Column and sniping. Regular Brigade meetings as well as meetings of Quartermasters of different Battalions in Castle Donovan. Attended I.R.B. meeting in Dublin, Easter 1921. Held up in Dublin by military

1st April, 1921 to 11th July, 1921. (Contd.)

in company with Mick Collins and L. Deasy before meeting and searched. Went through organisation of Brigade with D. Mulcahy, Diarmuid Hegarty and Liam Deasy when in Dublin.

12TH JULY, 1921 TO 30TH JUNE, 1922.

Taking over Barracks in Bandon, Skibbereen, Dunmanway, Kinsale. Taking stock of furniture, etc., in each Barrack. Transferring men round from different districts and getting them in for training. Sent to Dublin with L. Deasy and Tom Hales re Pact. Sent to Bantry with L. Deasy re disturbance of Officers. Visiting Brigade Bomb Factory in Manch and getting stock of bombs turned out three times weekly.

Attended meeting in Cork of Cork Brigades, where President, Dick Mulcahy and others attended.

Went through Brigade with Mick Collins and others to different ambush positions. Also on another occasion visited the different ambush positions in Brigade with President and G.H.Q. Staff.

Visited Divisional H.Q., Mallow, several times for arms and other war material and distributed through the different Battalions. Divided up Brigade funds, arms, etc., when Brigade was split up.

Responsible as Quartermaster, Cork 3 Brigade, for arming, equipping and feeding of a large armed force of men in a Brigade with a total of 5,750 men (strength on 11th July, 1921). Also ensuring that records of quantities of arms, ammunition, etc., held in each Battalion (seven Battalions) were sent in practically weekly. I also having to make it a point that there was not a doubt about the accuracy of reports or records. The latter I managed to confirm or otherwise by paying visits to Company dumps and Battalion dumps and inspecting on the spot condition of arms, etc. Arms had to be produced and accounted for in my presence.

Being responsible for planning and carrying out of collection of Brigade arms fund which resulted in approximately £12,000 being secured in the period November, 1920 to June, 1921. I was responsible for the safe keeping and distribution of this amount. The method of which amount was secured as follows : I instructed Battalion Quartermasters to put a levy on all residents in their respective areas on the basis of each individual's financial standing. Same to be judged on the number of live stock, etc., in the rural areas and on the basis of the business carried on in the towns. Notice was served at first on each property holder intimating the amount of levy placed on him or her and also stating that said levy would be called for and collected by responsible members of our organisation in the Company area where individuals resided. Where refusals were met with on first call by people hostile

to movement, a second call was made later on and if met with another refusal a seizure was made of goods, cattle, etc., to the value of the levy imposed. Seizures were mainly cattle in Brigade area. The seizure of cattle or other stock increased my work considerably as I had to arrange for the sale of same and send along instructions as to each required (price of same). Cattle had frequently to be sent at least 50 miles from the home of owners. This was risky work, needless to state, the owners often reported loss to enemy and enemy scouted a wide area to intercept at times.

On being notified of refusals to pay levy imposed, I issued instructions for the seizure of a number of cattle necessary to realise the amount levied from defaulters.

Brigade area was at least 100 miles in length and width was approximately 25 miles. The difficulty of transport was enormous as all roads were trenched every few miles throughout the Brigade area. The size of Brigade made regular Brigade meetings most difficult so that full responsibility for collecting of Brigade arms fund rested with myself as Brigade Quartermaster. I was solely responsible for the safe-keeping of £12,000 and the distribution of same to meet requirements as same arose until end of Civil War.

The requirements of Columns in Brigade area naturally rested on me in relation to arms, ammunition, clothing, feeding, etc. As a Column was practically

operating the whole time in Brigade area my personal contact with same was required each day. The provision of arms and ammunition throughout the Brigade area also rested on my shoulders.

All arms, etc., coming into the area from G.H.Q. had to be arranged for by myself and it was my responsibility to see that dumps were made centrally in the area.

In short, the location and control of all arms, explosives, etc., was my responsibility, also the providing of the money necessary to carry on.

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