

W. S. 1. 257

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21
No. W.S. 1257

ROINN  COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.
STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1,257.....

Witness

Seumas Ua Dalaigh (James Daly),
Tomnalossett,
Enniscorthy,
Co. Wexford.
Identity.

Adjutant North Wexford Brigade
March-July, 1921.

Subject.

Courtnacuddy Company Irish Volunteers,
No. 2 Battalion, Co. Wexford, 1915-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. S. 2534.....

Form B.S.M. 2

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BUREAU STAIRS MILEATA 1913-21
No. W.S. 1257

STATEMENT BY JAMES DALY,

Tomnalossett, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford.

Review of period from my joining of Irish Volunteers until the Truce, July 11th, 1921:

I joined the Irish Volunteers in the summer of 1915 at Courtnacuddy. We were enrolled by two men from Enniscorthy Company - Thomas Doyle, Shannon, and Seán Gallagher, Shannon. We continued weekly parades, which included drilling under an ex-soldier - Jack Quirke (decd.). We also had cross-country runs. During the winter of 1915 our activities consisted more of indoor drilling and lectures.

I was attending school at this time, the school being run by Professor de Lacy at Court St., Enniscorthy, for commercial students. I attended as usual on the morning of the Rising at Enniscorthy in 1916 and found the school closed and my teacher, Professor de Lacy, down at the Athenaeum out with the boys. I, in company with another student, Matthew Breen, Ballyhyland, Caim, (since deceased), remained on in town for the week. When the Rising was over the British demanded six leaders and my teacher, Professor de Lacy, was one of the six, with Seumas Rafter, Seumas Doyle, Richard F. King, Seán Etchingham and Bob Brennan. After the Rising things took a quiet turn and the Volunteers in my area disbanded.

There was no further activities until the threat of conscription came in 1918. The Davidstown Company was then reorganised by T.D. Sinnott and 24 men joined up, all remaining active and true up to the Truce in 1921.

The company was under the Captaincy of Patrick Murphy, Boolabawn, Davidstown, now a civic guard at Waterford. The activities of the company consisted of weekly drilling, parades, scouting and field manoeuvres. All arms and shotguns in the area belonging to farmers etc. were taken up and held by the company and used in the drill parades. This company, Davidstown, was in No. 2 Battalion area and when this battalion was being reorganised in August, 1920, I was promoted Battalion Quartermaster. This battalion meeting was held at Ballymorris, Galbally, Bree, in a house owned by the late Denis Asple, Galbally, himself an I.R.A. man attached to Bree Company. The meeting was presided over by Joseph Cummins, Oylegate, Brigade O/C (since deceased). Patrick Byrne of Rathduff, Killanne, was appointed Battalion Adjutant.

I found that the battalion was very deficient in firearms, all companies having only what they could pick up in their areas in the line of shotguns, and no ammunition. An attack was made on the barracks (R.I.C.) in Clonroche in April, 1920, in which a large number of men took part and which proved abortive. In August, 1920, myself and 3 companions - Michael Sinnott, brother of T.D. Sinnott, James Bowe, Dranagh, and Ml. Murphy (since decd.) - made a mock attack on R.I.C. barracks at Clonroche with mangolds from a nearby pit. The R.I.C. garrison returned the fire and sent up Verey lights, but these, fortunately for us, went unanswered. They shot an ass on the opposite side of the road as it was the only object they could see moving. This was reported in the papers officially by the British as an attack on the barracks. All companies

in the area were getting very active and energetic now, and drilling and scouting, dispatch riding, blocking of roads and digging trenches became very extensive.

Mr. Tom Lawless, Blueball, Offaly, arrived in the brigade area early in 1921 as Headquarters Staff Captain to organise the area and push things ahead. I met him on behalf of the brigade at Enniscorthy railway station and took him to Mrs. Murphy, Boolabawn, Davidstown, where he stayed and made his headquarters. Early in March, 1921, the Brigade Adjutant, Liam O'Leary of Clonee, Ferns, (now of Enniscorthy) was arrested and some official I.R.A. papers were found on him. Fearing that a lot of I.R.A. names were in these papers, a goodly number of I.R.A. officers and men had to ^{go} 'on the run'.

A meeting to elect a new Brigade Adjutant was called by Capt. Lawless for March 17th, 1921, and was held in an old house halfway between Davidstown chapel and Boolabawn, about 1/2 mile from the roadway. I was elected Brigade Adjutant at this meeting, Joseph Cummins being O/C; Patrick Doyle, Coolree, Ballindaggin, Q/M; Nicholas Murphy, Enniscorthy, Vice O/C; Matthew Holbrook, Enniscorthy, Brigade Engineer; Timothy J. Larkin, Duffry Hill, Enniscorthy, Brigade I/O.

From this on a big push was made to get things moving in the brigade area. Brigade Staff meetings and Brigade Council meetings were held at regular intervals, mostly at Murphy's, Boolabawn, Davidstown, Wat. Furlong's of Dranagh, old John Crowe's of Dranagh, Larkin's, Coolacarney, Ballindaggin, Doyle's of Ballywilliamroe, Ballycarney, and mostly at James Coady's, Corrigeen, Rathnure, well up in the Blackstairs Mountains. This

place of Coady's was used by Brigade and Battalion Officers as a sort of H.Q. A munition factory was started here by the brigade for the making of gunpowder and bombs and buckshot. It was to this place that the North Wexford Brigade Flying Column came when there was much enemy activities. About April, 1921, the personnel and officers of the column were changed. The former column was composed mostly of Enniscorthy men but the new A.S.U. was composed mostly of countrymen, especially those whose names were found on the previous Brigade Adjutant when he was arrested. The former A.S.U. took part in an attack on R.I.C. at Inch, Gorey, after which they were disbanded. Attacks were made on R.I.C. patrol going from Clonroche to Chapel railway station, but the R.I.C. got away. Constable Jones, Bunclody, was shot by members of A.S.U. at Bunclody. An attack was made by 34 picked men (not A.S.U.) from No. 2. Battalion area, about 5 from each company, on the mail train from Wexford to Dublin in May, 1921. This train used carry 10 soldiers and a sergeant every Friday from Wexford barracks to pay the Devon Regiment stationed at the Courthouse, Enniscorthy. This party used to travel en bloc, but on the day of the ambush they were mixed up amongst the passengers, about 2 in each carriage, and so upset I.R.A. arrangements which were worked out on the understanding that the soldiers would be together in one carriage. The train was brought to a standstill in a place known as the "Sandpit", about a mile on the Macmine side of Killurin. After about 5 minutes' attack, during which the train was riddled and all windows smashed, the attack was called off to save the lives of the passengers, mostly shoppers, women and children. A few soldiers were wounded. The attacking party had great difficulty in getting back to their own area, a distance of 10 miles or so in daylight as the countryside

was scoured by scores of military lorries. They passed at several points and the I.R.A. only a few fields away. Thanks were due to the late Denis Asple, Galbally, who knew the country well, for getting the I.R.A. safely away by every lane and Mass path.

About this time, May or June, 1921, the I.R.A. in the town of Enniscorthy were becoming very inactive as most of the well-known I.R.A. men were 'on the run'. A meeting and parade of Enniscorthy Company I.R.A. was called for The Repeal Field, Red Pat's Cross, and its officers were suspended by Capt. Thomas Lawless, H.Q. He formed what was known as the Enniscorthy A.S.U., specially to do duty in the town and to curb the activities of the Captain of the British military stationed at Courthouse, Enniscorthy - Capt. Yeo of the Devons. The Capt. appointed over this Active Service Unit was James Walsh, painter, Rafter St., Enniscorthy. It did not accomplish much locally as it was formed too near the Truce, but it gave the I.R.A. throughout the country heart as it gave Yeo something to think about at his doorstep. Lack of arms was the principal drawback in this brigade area - empty guns for a long time until the brigade munitions' camp was started at Corrigeen. The officer in charge of munition making at Corrigeen Camp in June, July, 1921, was Donal Cavaun, a member of the Irish Christian Brothers stationed at Enniscorthy. He left the order to join the I.R.A. The attacking party on ^{THE} train at Killurin, armed with shotguns and 4 rifles, only had about 8 or 10 rounds of buckshot each. When these were fired there wasn't a cartridge left in the battalion area. Week-end engineering classes were held in all battalion and company areas, instruction being

by Brigade O/C Engineering and Battalion Officer of Engineering.

In No. 2 Battalion area headquarters was established in a dug-out in Dranagh, Knock, which was never located. A few nights before the Truce we were called from dug-out to go to Ballindaggin to attack a party of drunken British military who were said to have billeted for the night at Foley's, Wheelagower. Five of us from the dug-out walked to Ballindaggin but when we arrived the military had left. Picked bodies of men from the No. 2 Battalion area lay in ambush on several occasions for R.I.C. patrols from Clonroche barracks, but they always drew a blank - the patrol would go some other road that particular day.

Signed: Seumas Ua Dalaigh
(Seumas Ua Dalaigh)

Date: 19.9.55
19.9.55

Witness: Sean Brennan Lieut. Col.
(Investigator) (Sean Brennan) Lieut.Col.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21
No. W.S. 1257