

W.S. 1,341
ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURD STAIRS MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 1,341

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1,341

Witness

Daniel Holland,
Timoleague,
Co. Cork.

Identity.

Q.M. Bandon Battalion
Cork III Brigade;

O/C. Transport and Supply
Cork III Brigade.
Subject.

Barryroe Company Irish Volunteers,
Co. Cork, 1918-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. ...S.2668.....

Form B.S.M. 2

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STATEMENT BY DANIEL HOLLAND,

Timoleague, Co. Cork.

I was born at Tiernanean, Lislevane, in September, 1892. My parents were farmers and contractors. I was educated at Butlerstown national school, and when I left school I went to work on the home farm.

I joined the Irish Volunteers at Barryroe early in 1918. The strength of the Barryroe Company at this time was about 80. As far as I can recollect, the officers of the unit were:

O/C - Michael McCarthy
1st Lt. - Michael Coleman
2nd Lt. - Dan Santry.

The Barryroe Company was attached to the Bandon Battalion, Cork Brigade. Other companies in the battalion were: Timoleague, Bandon, Kilbrittain, Ballinadee, Clogagh and Innishannon. The O/C of the battalion was Tom Hales.

The only training carried out was ordinary close order foot drill. Parades were held on a couple of nights each week and on Sunday afternoons.

There was an increase in the strength of the company (Barryroe) when the British threatened to enforce conscription in the spring of 1918. The strength of the unit at this time was about 100. There was little activity beyond the normal training and parades, but several raids for arms were carried out. All shotguns and other arms not already held by Volunteers were collected. In nearly all cases the arms were surrendered

voluntarily. About 20/25 shotguns and two or three revolvers were obtained in these raids.

The general election in December, 1918, led to very little activity in the area as the Sinn Féin candidate was returned unopposed.

When Cork 111 Brigade, which embraced the West Cork area, was formed in January, 1919, Bandon Battalion, to which our company was attached, became the 1st Battalion in the new brigade. The other battalions were, I think, Clonakilty (2nd), Dunmanway (3rd), Bantry (4th) and Skibbereen (5th). I am not sure that Castletownbere and Schull Battalions were formed at this time. The first officers of Cork 111 Brigade were, as far as I can recollect:

O/C - Tom Hales
 Vice O/C - cannot recollect
 Adjt. - Liam Deasy
 Q/M - cannot recollect.

There was a change in the officers of Barryroe Company about this time as the O/C, Michael McCarthy, left the district to go to work in Cork. He was replaced as O/C by Jim Moloney. The officers now were:

O/C - Jim Moloney
 1st Lt. - Michael Coleman
 2nd Lt. - Dan Santry.

The usual training continued throughout 1919 but it became slightly more advanced, as selected members were being trained in signalling, scouting and such activities. The arrival of a miniature rifle (.22) in the company led to increased interest when each section got its turn at target practice. In addition, selected members were engaged on making gunpowder and filling

cartridges. The gunpowder was made by mixing charcoal, sulphur and potassium chlorate.

The first major activity in the area in which members of Barryroe Company were engaged was an attack on Timoleague R.I.C. barracks on the night of February 26th, 1920. Seán Hales, who had replaced his brother Tom as Battalion O/C, was in charge of the operation. Other companies which were represented on this job were Ballinadee, Kilbrittain, Timoleague and Clogagh. I was in charge of a party who were engaged in blocking the Clonakilty-Timoleague and Timoleague-Darra³a roads. The attack was opened about midnight and continued until about 6 a.m. A mine was laid against the door of the barracks but did not explode, as fire was opened on the building by members of the attacking party who had taken up position in the houses opposite the barracks. In an effort to explode the mine, a load of hay was then pushed up to the door and set on fire, but this also failed to explode the mine. Intermittent firing continued throughout the night, and, as the garrison had failed to surrender, the attack was called off at daybreak and all sections were withdrawn. I then returned to Barryroe area with the other members of that company.

When the evacuated R.I.C. barracks at Courtmacsherry was destroyed in accordance with a general order from G.H.Q., I was again in charge of a party engaged in blocking the Courtmacsherry-Lislevane road. I cannot recollect the names of the members of the party who were with me on this occasion. The barracks was demolished by a strong party drawn from Timoleague and Barryroe Companies under Seán Hales (Battalion O/C).

Republican courts were established in (I think) June, 1920, under an edict of Dáil Éireann, which had been set up following the general election in December, 1918. A parish court was established in Barryroe - the members being Jerh. O'Brien, Daniel O'Leary and John Holland (I think). This court dealt with minor cases, such as breaches of licensing laws, abuse, petty larceny. The more serious cases, such as questions of title to land, claims for damages, etc. were dealt with by the District Court. I cannot recollect the names of the members of the latter court. In connection with the working of the courts, I remember that I was forced to protest vehemently at a court on one occasion, as the court imposed a sentence of 2 months' detention on a man charged with some minor offence. My protest was based on the absence of a suitable place of detention and on the undue demands which would be made on the members of the I.R.A. who would be called upon to act as guards on the prisoner. As a result of my protest, the court altered its decision and substituted a fine for the term of imprisonment. I should mention that in the early stages the work of enforcing court decrees and protecting the court fell on the shoulders of the I.R.A. in the area of the court. At a later stage a Republican police force, which took over such duties, was formed.

In August, 1920, nearly all members of Barryroe Company were in ambush for three nights in succession on Courtmacsherry-Lislevane road at Carrageen, about $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles east of Lislevane village. It was proposed to attack a military cycle patrol which operated from

Timoleague on the Timoleague-Lislevane-Courtmacsherry-Timoleague road. The usual strength of the patrol was about 20. The ambush party, under the Company O/C (Jim Moloney), took up positions behind the roadside fence north of the road. They were extended over a distance of approximately 150 yards. Some were armed with shotguns and a few had revolvers. The strength of the ambush party was about 80. Amongst those present were John Hayes, Larry Sexton, Dan Santry, Michael Coleman, Dan Holland (witness), Denis O'Brien, Jerh. O'Hea, John Brickley and Con Calnan. I was in position with three others at the eastern end of the ambush site. I was armed with a revolver. My instructions were to hold up the officer who led the patrol and, should it be found necessary, to use my revolver. The operation was abortive as the patrol did not pass.

About this time also I was one of a party who entered Timoleague on a Sunday morning to attack a party of military from Timoleague Castle who attended Mass in the village. Charlie Hurley (Brigade O/C) was in charge, but there was no attack as the enemy party did not put in an appearance.

I should have mentioned that the Brigade O/C (Tom Hales) and Brigade Q/M (Pat Harte) were arrested towards the end of July, 1920. This led to changes in the Brigade Staff, which now was:

O/C - Charlie Hurley
 Vice O/C - Ted O'Sullivan
 Adjt. - Liam Deasy
 Q/M - Dick Barrett.

There was also a change in the officers of Barryroe about this time. The new officers were:

O/C - Mick Coleman
 1st Lt. - Dan Santry
 2nd Lt. - John Hayes.

All members of Barryroe Company were engaged in August-September, 1920, on the collection of the levy for the arms fund in the area. This levy was based on the Poor Law Valuation of the holding or premises at the rate of 3d in the £. In general there was no difficulty in collecting the amount due, but there were two Protestant farmers in my area who refused to pay when called upon. These were - Perrott and - Woodbyrne, whose levies were £15 and £5 respectively. At this time I was Section Leader, Broad Strand section of Barryroe Company, and so had to call in person on the defaulters. When I informed Perrott that we would have to seize some of his stock, he agreed to pay up, and Woodbyrne did likewise on being informed that the local threshing mill owner would not be permitted to enter his holding.

About this time I joined the Battalion Staff of the Bandon Battalion as Transport and Supply Officer. I was only a short time on this job when I was transferred to the Brigade Staff in a similar capacity. I was responsible for organising transport and supply services throughout the brigade. The establishment of the transport service necessitated the provision of a number of cycles in roadworthy condition in each company area, ensuring that horse transport was available as and when required and that boats were available where rivers were to be crossed in any area. The officers of the brigade were:

O/C - Charlie Hurley
Vice O/C - Ted O'Sullivan
Adjt.- Liam Deasy
Q/M - Dick Barrett.

On December 31st, 1920, I took part in an abortive attack on Kilbriain R.I.C. barracks. Seán Hales was in charge of the operation, which was carried out mainly by the members of the Kilbriain Company. In this attack a mine was laid at the barrack door by, I think, Denis Manning and some other members of the unit, but it failed to explode. Several volleys were fired by our men, who were in position in houses opposite the barracks. This fire was returned by the garrison, who sent up Verey lights, but, although intermittent shooting continued for about 3 hours, the attack was called off, as in the absence of a successful mine explosion there was no hope of success. I was in position in a doorway close to the barrack and on the same side of the roadway awaiting the result of the explosion. Some of the men whose names I can remember as being present on this occasion were: Mick Crowley, Jackie O'Neill, David O'Sullivan. There was a somewhat similar attack on this post on January 14th, 1921, which was also abortive.

About the middle of January, 1921, I joined the Brigade Column under Tom Barry at Farnivane to the north of Bandon. The column was operating in this area and took up ambush positions on a number of occasions, but there was no appearance by the enemy.

The column was at Crossmahon on the night of January 24th, 1921, when we were informed that it was proposed to attack an enemy curfew patrol in Bandon town.

The column was divided into a number of sections, which were allocated to cover enemy posts at -

- (1) the military barracks and Black and Tan post at Devonshire Arms Hotel. This party was under Charlie Hurley (Brigade O/C).
- (2) Black and Tan post at western end of South Main St. Liam Deasy (Brigade Adjutant) was in charge.
- (3) The main body, under Tom Barry (Column O/C), moved into Bandon town to attack the patrol in North Main St..

I was a member of No. 3 party. When all sections had taken up their positions I was ordered by the O/C (Tom Barry) to select 6 men to remove a large mine (which we had taken in to town with us with a view to laying it for an armoured car) to a safe place, as it was decided not to use the mine on this occasion. The mine at this time was within about 100 yards of the military barracks on the Bandon-Dunmanway road. I selected six men, including Dan Ca^Nty (Newcestown) and another man from Ballinadee whose name I cannot recollect. We removed the mine to Lordan's, Lisarourke, where we dumped it in a hay rick with a few small bombs. We billeted at this house (Lordan's), where we remained until 9 a.m. next day, when, owing to enemy activity, we were forced to move from our billets - taking the mine with us. The column moved into the area later that night and removed the mine to another district. I should have mentioned that the curfew patrol did not make its appearance, and after waiting for about 3 hours the column opened fire on all posts and then withdrew.

During the period to mid March, 1921, I was engaged on various activities throughout the Bandon Battalion area - visiting company areas and ensuring that

the work of destroying enemy lines of communication was carried out. I was also assisting Peter Monahan, who was working on the manufacture of mines and bombs.

The Brigade Column was in Shippool area on March 16th, 1921, and on the morning of the 17th (St. Patrick's Day) we took up positions about 5 a.m. on the Innishannon-Kinsale road about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Innishannon. The strength of the column was about 100. Tom Barry was in charge. We were extended over a distance of approximately 300 yards behind the roadside wall. All were armed with rifles. I was in position beside a gateway about midway in the ambush site. Although we remained in position until dusk the expected enemy convoy did not appear, and the column was then moved off to billets in Skough area to the east of Innishannon.

On the night of March 18th, 1921, the column moved to Crossbarry area, where we billeted in a number of houses. We reached billets about 2 a.m. on March 19th and guards were posted. Within an hour all members were summoned from billets. The column was assembled and informed that large enemy forces were raiding in the area. The column was then divided into a number of sections under Seán Hales, John Lordan, Pete Kearney, Denis Lordan, Christy O'Connell, Tom Kelleher and Mick Crowley. The O/C (Tom Barry) set up his H.Q. in Beasley's farmyard in the centre of the position selected for the ambush. of enemy forces reported to be moving east along the old Cork-Bandon road. All sections took up positions north of the road and were extended over a distance of about 400 yards behind the roadside fence and in Beasley's and Harold's farmyards. It was now

about 5 a.m. Two mines were laid in the road - one at each end of the position. I was responsible for exploding the mine at the western end where the enemy convoy was to enter the site. I was between a section under Seán Hales just west of my position and a section under John Lordan to the east. The strength of each section was, I think, 14 men. Seán Hales's section was in position behind the fence of a by-road to the north which joined the main road close to where my mine was laid. The sections under Mick Crowley and Pete Kearney were further to the east, while the sections under Christy O'Connell and Denis Lordan were acting as flanking parties to the west and east respectively. Tom Kelleher's section was to the rear of the main position to cover possible attack from that direction (north). I should have mentioned that the mines were made of timber casing about 3'X1½'X1½' filled with gelignite and to be exploded by electric detonators. My instructions were to allow as many lorries as possible to pass into the position to the east before exploding my mine. About 8 a.m. the approach of the enemy convoy was signalled and almost immediately the first lorry passed by my position. As the third lorry in the convoy passed me, firing broke out to the east. I immediately pressed the exploder but the mine at my position failed to explode. The outbreak of firing at this early stage was, I believe, due to the fact that the military in the leading lorry saw one of the I.R.A. party from the section in Harold's farmyard and immediately jumped from the lorry and opened fire. This fire was immediately returned by the sections under John Lordan, Mick Crowley and Pete Kearney to the east,

and in a matter of minutes the enemy within the ambush position were wiped out or on the run across country. Seán Hales's and Christy O'Connell's sections also opened fire on the enemy lorries to the west which had not reached the entrance to the ambush. After the first outburst of fire and the failure of my mine to explode, I noticed the military in the fourth lorry, which was the only other lorry I could see, jumping out and dashing away across the fields to the south. The enemy party in the 3rd lorry endeavoured to take up positions behind the fence south of the road and continued to fight for about 10 minutes. At this stage firing ceased, and with the members of the section (John Lordan's) to the east of my position I was instructed to go on to the road to burn the enemy lorries while others were collecting the arms and ammunition. With Mick Crowley and some men of his section I set fire to the three lorries within the ambush site. The arms captured included a Lewis gun, several rifles and a good supply of ammunition. I should have mentioned that, immediately the first shots were fired, Flor Begley - a member of the Brigade Staff, began playing Irish war tunes on the bag pipes. He continued to play till fighting ceased. He was in position in Harold's farmyard.

Just as all the booty had been collected and the lorries set on fire, there was an outburst of shooting at the eastern end of the main position. This appeared to come from the southern side of the road opposite the position of Denis Lordan's flanking party. This fire was returned by the section (Denis Lordan's), which was immediately reinforced by some men from the section

(Pete Kearney's) on its western flank. There was also some shooting to the rear in front of the position held by Tom Kelleher's section. Within a short time firing ceased on these fronts - the enemy being driven off. We then collected our casualties - three killed (Peter Monahan, Jerh. O'Leary, Con Daly) and two seriously wounded (Dan Corcoran and Jim Crowley) - and withdrew in a north westerly direction, halting for a short time when we were outside the enemy ring. Flankers were then thrown out and the whole column moved across country to Gurranereigh, where we billeted that night, having travelled about 14 miles from Crossbarry.

The column remained in Gurranereigh until the evening of March 20th, when we marched through the night to Clogagh Church where the body of Charlie Hurley (Brigade O/C) lay awaiting burial. He had been killed on the morning of Crossbarry fight when he endeavoured to shoot his way through a raiding party of military which surrounded the house in which he was billeted while recovering from wounds. His body had been removed from the Workhouse at Bandon by some members of Cumann na mBan, Kilbrittain. We reached Clogagh about 2 a.m., having marched over 20 miles from our billets. The local priest was called, guards were posted and the remainder of the column entered the church to pray for their dead Brigade O/C. The coffin was removed from the church and, with arms reversed, we marched behind the coffin to the graveside, where a firing party fired three volleys over the grave.

We then marched away to Ahiohill, which we reached about 7 a.m. on March 21st, 1921. Next night we moved

on to Carahabouler in Rossmore area, where we remained for a few days. During this period I was summoned to Column H.Q. by the O/C (Tom Barry). He asked me if I would take the responsibility of making a mine. I informed him that I had only a very poor idea of the job as I had only worked with the late Peter Monahan on this work on odd occasions during the previous couple of months. The O/C did not give me any instructions to attempt the job, but in a day or two I was instructed to obtain the materials for the manufacture of a mine and some bombs. I then arranged for the collection of gelignite, detonators and fuse from the dumps in the area. When the explosives and other material had been assembled at Rossmore, a retired officer of the Royal Engineers named McCarthy was introduced to me by Tim O'Donoghue (Vice O/C Clonakilty Battalion). This officer instructed me how to make the mine and after about 10 minutes or so left. I then proceeded to follow his instructions, and during the course of 4 or 5 nights I assembled the mine and made a number of canister bombs. I was assisted by Tim O'Donoghue and a couple of others whose names I cannot recollect. This mine was made with a wooden casing as previously described and was about $2\frac{1}{2}$ 'X2'X1'. On this occasion electric detonators were not used - a length of ordinary fuse being attached to a suitable detonator within the casing. The canister bombs were filled with scrap metal in which a stick of gelignite, detonator and fuse was fixed. The fuse protruded through a hole in the cover of the tin container. When the mine and bombs had been made they were handed over to the Column O/C.

There was a change in the personnel of the Brigade Staff following the death of Charlie Hurley. The officers now were:

O/C - Liam Deasy
 Vice O/C - Ted O'Sullivan
 Adjt.- Gibbs Ross
 Q/M - Dick Barrett.

The Brigade Q/M (Dick Barrett) was arrested towards the end of March, 1921, and he was replaced by Tadhg O'Sullivan (Q/M Bandon Battalion). At this time the officers of Bandon Battalion were:

O/C - Seán Hales
 Vice O/C - John Lordan
 Adjt.- Jim O'Mahoney
 Q/M - Tadhg O'Sullivan.

When Tadhg O'Sullivan was appointed Brigade Q/M I was ordered to return to Bandon Battalion H.Q. to take over the post of Q/M. The H.Q. was at Murphy's, Skeaf. I was now engaged in looking after supplies, visiting Brigade H.Q. to make personal reports at intervals and maintaining touch with the column moving round the area.

Early in May, 1921, arrangements were made by the column to ambush a party of military which was reported to be travelling by train between Courtmacsherry and Ballinac^sCarthy. Positions were taken up on the railway embankment a short distance from Timoleague railway station. I was allocated to a position at the eastern end, with instructions to ensure that if the train, when halted, tried to reverse, I was to use fish plates, with which I was supplied, to endeavour to derail it. The enemy did not travel on the train on the day selected for the ambush, so all sections withdrew to billets. I returned to Battalion H.Q.

In the period to early June, 1921, when I was arrested I was engaged on organising activities in the battalion area. I was on my way to a Battalion Council meeting in Newcestown area when I was arrested. I was taken to Courtmacsherry, Clonakilty, and later to Military Detention Barracks, Cork, where I was tried on a charge of giving a false name and address. I was sentenced to six months with hard labour. I was then removed to Cork Gaol, where I was detained in a hospital ward for about 3 weeks as a result of ill-treatment received when taken to Clonakilty. I was then removed to Spike Island Prison Compound to serve the remainder of my sentence. While in Spike Island the prison was wrecked during the course of a protest against prison conditions, and with others I was then returned to Cork Gaol to complete my sentence. On the completion of my sentence in Cork I was transferred to the Internment Camp, Spike Island, and later to Maryboro Prison, from where I was released on December 8th, 1921.

Rank at the Truce - Bde. O/C Transport and Supply,
Cork 111. Brigade. Strength of the brigade - about 3,500.

Signed: *D. Holland*
(D. Holland)
Date: 26th January 1956
26th January 1956.

Witness: *P. O'Donnell*
(P. O'Donnell)
(Investigator)

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1043-24
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-24
No. W.S. 1341