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COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1674.

Witness

Timothy Buckley,
Clondrohid P.O.,
Macroon,
Co. Cork.

Identity.

O/C, Macroon Battn. Column, Cork 1 Bgde., I.R.A.

Subject.

Clondrohid Coy., Macroon Battalion, Cork 1 Bgde.,
I.R.A., 1921 - 1932.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil.

File No S. 362.

Form B.S.M. 2

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 1674

STATEMENT BY TIMOTHY BUCKLEY,
Clondrohid P.O., Macroom, Co. Cork.

I have already furnished statements covering my activities up to the Truce on July 11th, 1921, under Reference No. S.362. I now desire to furnish particulars of my activities in the subsequent period.

Normal military routine was followed by all units during the summer of 1921. A brigade training camp, which was attended by about forty men, representing all battalions in Cork I Brigade, was held at Valley Desmond, Gougane Barra, for about twelve days in mid August, 1921. Seán Murray, an ex member of the Irish Guards, was training officer at this camp. The representatives at this camp from Macroom battalion were: Jim Murphy (Battalion Vice O/C), William Powell (O/C, Crookstown), Jeremiah Cotter, Christy Hartnett and myself.

When the course of training at the brigade camp had been completed, the representatives from the various battalions returned to their home areas, where they set up similar camps to train the company officers throughout the battalions. These battalion camps were later followed by camps in each company area, so that practically every member of the I.R.A. was trained in one aspect or another of military activities within less than six months of the Truce. Training camps were set up in Clondrohid company area during the autumn of 1921, and every man in the company underwent a course of training. Special

attention was paid to the special services, especially engineering. Two engineers from Cork city were engaged in the manufacture of land mines in the area, from September to Christmas, 1921.

The negotiations for a Treaty with the British were going on all this time, and, as there appeared to be a great danger of a break-down in the talks, we were all preparing for a renewal of the fight. Parades of all units were held regularly, and intensive training was carried on. All special services were highly organised. Roads were mined. Ambush positions were selected. Bridges were holed so that explosives could be set at short notice. Special dumps were made for arms, and a large supply of mines and bombs was built up.

The Treaty was signed on December 6th, 1921, and there was a general feeling of relief at first. We thought we had won the fight for the Republic, but we soon found we had only a partitioned Ireland. There was considerable opposition to the acceptance of the Treaty; but it was accepted by Dáil Éireann on a vote of sixty-four to fifty-seven. A considerable number of men in our battalion (Macroom) were opposed to the acceptance of the Treaty. However, Dáil Éireann had decided to set up a Provisional Government to operate the Treaty, and this body now arranged to take over from the British.

On the evacuation of the enemy garrisons (R.I.C., Military and Auxiliaries) from the posts occupied by them in Macroom area, the majority of these buildings were occupied by units of the

I.R.A. drawn from the battalion. Soon after the British had arranged to evacuate Ballincollig military barracks, I was asked by Dan Corkery (Battalion O/C, Macroom) to take charge of a maintenance party of about forty men, and to take over this barracks. I moved into the premises on the day of the British evacuation.

Some short time prior to taking over Ballincollig - one day early in April 1922 - three British officers, accompanied by their driver, arrived in Macroom. They were taken prisoners by our forces in Macroom. It was established that they were engaged on Intelligence work. They were shot the same night and buried in my company (Clondrohid) area.

Next morning, a strong enemy force arrived in Macroom. They were searching for the missing officers, and threatened to attack Macroom Castle - where we were billeted - unless they found their men. With ten other men, I was standing by to avoid this attack for over a week, but the enemy did not take any further action.

On the morning of June 30th, 1922, I was ordered to parade every man on the maintenance party at Ballincollig. With the exception of one man, all were immediately detailed for duty at Limerick where fighting had broken out between Provisional Government (Free State) forces and I.R.A. forces. Next morning, about twenty-five men arrived from Cork city to replace the men who went to Limerick. The new maintenance party were undergoing training until about mid July when I

was placed in charge of a column of about twenty-five men, and ordered to proceed to Waterford. On our way, we called to Union Quay barracks, Cork, where we were joined by Henry O'Mahoney (O/C, 9th Battalion, Cork I Brigade) and "Pa" Murray, with a column of about twenty men from Collins barracks, Cork. Pa Murray now took charge of the combined force.

We travelled in two lorries to Mallow where we entrained for Dungarvan. Having called to the barracks here, we went to Confession, and then continued our journey by lorry to Waterford. We had to wait for some time outside the city while we endeavoured to make contact with the headquarters there. The Free State forces had now entered the city (Waterford) which was being shelled. As no orders came from the headquarters in the city, we withdrew to a farmer's place nearby where we slept in an old barn. We had some local lads with us, but they could not give us much information.

On the following morning, I was sent with twenty-five men to brigade headquarters which was situated in a big mansion outside the city. I had a note for the O/C there. He told me that he had nothing to do for us, so we went back to our own headquarters in the farmer's place where we again slept that night in the barn.

We moved next day to the south of Waterford city, and I think we went into Kilkenny where we expected to link up with Dan Breen's (Tipperary) Column. We were marched all day, but did not make contact with them. We were not very hungry, and

found difficulty in getting food, as the people had no surplus food laid in. We retraced our steps, and billeted in a hayshed that night.

We moved next morning back to the Knockmealdown mountains and on to the Comeraghs where a supply of rations reached us from Kilmacthomas. There was also a supply of cigarettes, but no tobacco. As I was a pipe smoker, I missed the tobacco, and only that Freddy Murray shared some of his with me, I would have felt bad. I had no money to buy any if it was to be had. We remained in this area for a few days before moving on to Dungarvan where we took over billets in two hotels and had a good sleep, for the first time in over a week.

As there was no activity in the area, we now entrained for Mallow and reported back to Divisional Headquarters. We were not long in Mallow when we received instructions to return to Waterford area. We travelled by train to Dungarvan, and were then conveyed to the Stradbally-Bonmahon area where we went into billets, made available by the local I.R.A. Six of us were billeted at Russell's, near Stradbally, where we were well catered for. We rested in billets until about 5 p.m. when we got orders to be ready to move at 6 p.m., to hold a line from Bonmahon across the country. I was in charge of a column guarding the coast at Bonmahon where it was expected that Free State forces might try to effect a landing. The people here were all very friendly. A few of us were staying at Murray's - I think one of the boys in this family was in charge of an I.R.A. column guarding

Tramore. We were operating in this area for about a week, when we got instructions, in the middle of the night, to go on to Carrick-On-Suir.

We moved immediately on foot to Portlaw where we billeted at Curraghmore, the residence of Lord Waterford. Having posted guards, we had some food, and rested for the remainder of the night. We moved into Carrick-on-Suir that day, and occupied positions in the town which we evacuated that night, returning to Curraghmore. Next morning, we learned that Carrick-on-Suir had been occupied by Free State forces during the night.

We remained in Portlaw area for a day, and, next night, we received instructions to proceed to Dungarvan. It was pouring rain when we climbed into the lorries for this trip, and, by the time we reached Dungarvan, we were all wet to the skin. At the barracks in Dungarvan, every man received a glass of rum, and we went to bed while our clothes were being dried in the boiler house. Next day, passes were issued to enable anyone who wished to go around the town. The passes were issued under the signature of P. O'Reilly, who was later executed by Free State forces in Waterford military barracks.

Another line was now formed across the country from Clonea to the east of Dungarvan. We were part of the force holding this line for a few days, until orders were received that we were to return to Cork city.

We travelled by train to Cork and billeted at Collins barracks. At 6 a.m. next morning, we were

paraded, and informed that the Free State forces had landed at Passage West. I was placed in charge of a party of twenty-four men and instructed to occupy a position between Douglas and Rochestown, on the road to Passage West. I travelled with my party to the position allocated to me, and took cover behind the fences there. We remained in our position until nightfall, but, although we could hear heavy rifle and machine gun fire to the east, we did not see any enemy forces. The Free State men were also using eighteen pounder guns at this time, and I saw shells falling on a house on the top of the hill over Douglas which ^{was} we occupied by our forces. I withdrew with my party to Douglas at nightfall, and here we were supplied with a good meal served up by members of Cork City Cumann na mBan. We had no sleep that night, as we moved into positions about two miles on the city side of Douglas where we remained until early next day when we received orders to withdraw to Cork city.

We returned to the city, and continued on to Ballincollig where we got a lorry to Macroom. My column was accompanied by two Wexford lads who had travelled with us from Waterford. They remained with us until October, 1922. I cannot remember their names. When we arrived at Macroom Castle, which was held by our own men, we went to bed, and I did not wake up until 7 p.m. next evening.

On the Sunday evening following August 16th, 1922, I was in charge of a column of twenty men in a position overlooking Clondrohid village when we were engaged by a party of Free State forces at Clondrohid

bridge. After a sharp exchange of fire, they were beaten off, suffering one fatal casualty (Lieutenant Lee) and having one wounded. About two hours later, they returned with reinforcements and renewed the fight. Our positions were battered with machine gun fire, and they also used the eighteen pounder gun from Macroom, but they failed to get the range. Eventually, we were forced to evacuate our position, but, having occupied a fresh one to the rear, we eventually compelled the enemy force to withdraw to their base in Macroom.

On September 3rd, 1922, I took part with the brigade column in an attack on the Free State posts in Macroom, but, after a full day's fighting, the attack had to be called off. On our way to carry out this attack, we missed an enemy party which moved out to Clondrohid area on a raid. It was approaching daybreak at the time, and one of the officers (a lieutenant) of the raiding party was taken prisoner and disarmed by two of our men (John Riordan and Dan Looney) who were acting as guard on Erskine Childers in the vicinity of Clondrohid bridge. The failure of the remainder of the Free State party to notice the absence of their colleague was probably due to the fact that the attack on Macroom opened just about the time of his capture, and they withdrew immediately towards the town.

My next engagement was with an enemy raiding party at Gortnalicka. This fight took place in the early morning, and we forced the enemy to withdraw, but they captured one of our lads - James Buckley, aged about forty-one years. Later that day, they

shot him, and threw his body into a hole where a land mine had been exploded during the engagement. During the remainder of September, 1922, I was engaged with several others in sniping enemy posts in Macroom. We also lay in ambush on the Macroom-Millstreet road on a number of occasions, but no action developed.

With Dick Browne and Jim Twohig, I visited Ballinagree on October 3rd, 1922. We were not long there when a strong party of Free State forces arrived. After an exchange of shots, I escaped. Jim Twohig and Dick Browne were taken prisoner. Shortly after this, some more of our boys were captured.

At this stage, it was not safe to sleep in any house as large enemy forces were continually raiding all over the area. We slept in haysheds most of the time. We had a few chaunts where we would call occasionally for a good sleep in a bed. With Jim Murphy (Battalion Vice O/C), I was resting in one of these houses when it was surrounded by a body of Free State troops. We were warned by the woman of the house that the house was surrounded, so we prepared to fight. However, the troops withdrew without searching the house - they had asked for a drink of water and some bread - and we settled down for a good sleep.

Things were getting very hot about this time, and we never knew when or where an enemy raiding party would make its appearance, so we decided to make a dug-out in the townland of Mullinroe. There were twelve families living in this townland, and they could be trusted to the last man and woman.

The district was only three and a half miles from Macroom. We build our dug-out, and it was there that we often escaped from enemy raiders.

With about five men from Clondrohid company, I was on outpost duty during the attack by our battalion column on the Free State forces in Ballyvourney on December 6th, 1922. Enemy forces raided Gortnalicka late in the evening of the day of this attack. They opened fire from a distance on Daniel Casey who was alone in the district and was armed with a rifle. Casey was wounded and, when the officer in charge of the Free State forces reached the wounded man, he (the officer) shot him through the heart. This officer's name was Conlan. My sister and my wife were the first people to reach the dead man.

We were also on duty during an attack on Millstreet early in 1923, and one on a convoy at Carriganima about mid April 1923. In the period between these engagements, we were sniping enemy posts at every suitable opportunity.

The headquarters of Macroom battalion during the Civil War was at Lynch's, Mullinroe, and at Mrs. Dineen's, Cashloura. The latter was the call house for all officers of the brigade and division where we had scouts to lead them to outside areas. This house was at the foot of Musherabeg, and was visited on numerous occasions by Liam Lynch, Ernie O'Malley, Tod Andrews, Con Moloney, Tom Crofts, Tom Barry, Liam Deasy and other leading I.R.A. men.

When I went to Ballincollig barracks in charge of the men from Macroom battalion, the officers of Clondrohid company became -

O/C - Michael Casey.
1st Lieutenant - Tom O'Connor.
2nd Lieutenant - Jim Twohig, Lacaduy.

Two men from my company (Clondrohid) joined the Free State army. They were Dan O'Connell and Tim Murphy. Eight members, in addition to myself, took an active part in the civil war on the Republican side, viz.: Michael Casey, Bob Clifford, Jim Twohig, Tom O'Connor, Dan Quill, Tim O'Shea, Jack Murphy, John Riordan and Tim Buckley (witness). The last three and myself escaped capture.

When the Cease Fire order was issued by I.R.A. headquarters, we got to work collecting all arms in the company area, cleaning them and putting them in safe dumps. We had two Lewis guns, eighteen rifles and a good supply of ammunition. After some time, we dumped them in a farmer's house where they remained until 1940 when they were handed over to the Local Defence Force.

After the Cease Fire, the enemy forces made several attempts to capture us. On several occasions, large forces from Macroom, Millstreet and Rylane raided every house in the Musherah, Moulnahorna and Cashloura areas, but we were not to be found. During the majority of these raids, we were in our dug-out at Mullinroe. As the summer of 1923 advanced, it was often Jim Murphy (Battalion Vice O/C) and myself strolled from our dug-out to the foot of

Mushera, to make a friendly call on Paddy Bill Goggin, who kept a shop there. He was always able to supply us with the latest information regarding the general position in the district, as he was always moving round the area, buying eggs. On these trips, we often met people from near Macroom, going to Mushera mountain to cut turf. All of them knew us, but apparently they never disclosed our whereabouts to the Free State authorities. I was on the run until late in the summer of 1924, at which time I returned home.

With the other members of the Company (Clondrohid) who were still on the run, I took an active part in the work of the General Election in September, 1923. We had a few narrow shaves from capture, as the Free State forces were still raiding regularly for us. However, the people were getting more friendly towards us. We were unable to vote at the Election, as the Free State military were watching the booths all day.

Towards the end of 1924, a force of C.I.D. searched my father's lands and houses about five times. They were looking for an arms dump. They found an old rifle which I did not know was there. I was arrested and taken to Cork gaol

for ten days, before being tried and released.
I was an officer of the I.R.A. up to 1932. I
resigned when the Fianna Fáil Government got
into power.

SIGNED: Timothy Buckley

DATE: 16th September 1954

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WITNESS P. Darnell