

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 206

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 206

**Witness**

Mr. Jerry Golden,  
49 Croydon Park Avenue,  
Fairview,  
Dublin.  
**Identity**

(See W.S.177)

Member of 'B' Coy. 1st Battn.

Dublin Brigade 1916.

**Subject**

Events leading up to and the raid for  
arms on the Kings Inn's on Tuesday, 1st June  
1920.

**Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness**

Nil

File No. S.318

Form B.S.M. 2.

STORY OF THE EVENTS LEADING UP TO AND THE  
 RAID FOR ARMS ON THE KING'S INNS ON TUESDAY  
 1ST JUNE, 1920.

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On Monday, the 17th May 1920, the Dublin Law Clerks started their famous strike for higher wages and better conditions. On that day I was put in charge of a picket of strikers to picket the Registry of Deeds, a Government office housed in The King's Inns, Henrietta St., Dublin.

On my arrival with the picket about 10.15 a.m. I saw that a military guard consisting of a sergeant and 12 men of The Cheshire Regiment were on duty in one of the rooms on the ground floor of the portion of building nearest to the ruins of the Linen Hall Bks. and also that the discipline of the guards was very lax, as I was allowed to talk to the men who were supposed to be acting as sentries, and also allowed to go into the Guardroom and chat to the men off duty. While in the Guardroom I saw a rifle rack containing the 12 rifles of the sergeant and 11 men, the other rifle being with the sentry on duty; there was also in the Guardroom 1 Lewis machine-gun with 2 spare pans of ammunition and 2 boxes of Mills hand grenades containing 12 in each box; also a field telephone which was connected with the military in the North Dublin Union who supplied the guard; and the Webley revolver of the Sergeant was lying around on the table in the room.

As soon as my picket duty was over at 4 o'clock I went to Vice-Brigadier Peadar Clancy and reported to him what I had seen and he asked me to give him a full written report and, if possible, a rough sketch plan of the layout of the building, showing in particular the location of the Guardroom, and of the adjoining streets to the building, and if any military posts were in the vicinity. I gave him the written report and looked at the sketch. He asked me if I could arrange for him to visit the building himself to check up on the report. I replied I would be able to arrange with our Strike Committee Chairman to have a permit issued to him as a solicitor's

apprentice from the country who had business to do in the Registry of Deeds. I went back to our Committee Rooms and explained the matter to our Chairman who, I knew, was sympathetic to us and had several times given me subscriptions for arms, and he immediately wrote out a permit authorising my picket to allow Mr. Charles Kinsella to enter the Registry of Deeds to transact business on behalf of his employer - a fictitious name was given - who had recognised the Union and had paid the rates of wages demanded on behalf of his staff. As soon as our Chairman had signed the permit he handed it to me and wished our venture success. I immediately got in touch with Peadar and gave him the permit and he arranged to visit the building next day, or the following day.

On Tuesday, 18th, one of my picket brought his pocket camera with him to take snaps of the picket. We went out to the front of the building and first took the entire picket in two groups; then we took a snap of some of the military and the Sergeant asked us to take a snap of the Guardroom with all the arms and equipment. I could hardly believe my senses when he asked for this as it was my intention to try for a snap of the Guardroom, and as the sun was then shining into the room on the Lewis gun and rifle rack, I thought such opportunity should not be lost, so the snap of the Guardroom was taken, and after three or four more snaps were taken, I got the roll sent away for developing and printing, the prints of which we received on Thursday, 20th.

Meanwhile, Mr. Charles Kinsella (otherwise Peadar Clancy) arrived at the Registry of Deeds on Wednesday, 19th, and explained to me that he was a solicitor's apprentice from Ennis and was working in his employer's Town Agent's office and wished to transact some business in The Registry of Deeds. I inspected his permit from our Strike Committee and it appeared to be in order, and as he did not know his way about the building, I offered to show him round. On our way upstairs to one of the offices we passed by the end of the passage to the Guardroom and I showed Peadar the rifle rack and

position of the machine gun, while upstairs both of us chatted about the prospects of raiding the Guardroom, and I told him it would be easy, as the military seemed to be very lax. I also told him about the snaps taken the previous day and he was delighted with the news and stated he would make no further move until he received a copy of the snap. On Thursday I sent one of the picket for the snaps and when he returned with them I handed the soldiers copies of their group and the Sergeant a copy of the Guardroom. I kept another copy for Peadar and handed the remainder to the owner of the camera. I might mention that Peadar had handed me 5/- when he was up to pay for the snaps, and when I brought the snap of the Guardroom down to him he was delighted with it.

The next step was Peadar's appearance at the 1st Battn. Council meeting on Friday, 21st May, at which I was present as O/C. Cyclists 1st Battn. Peadar spoke about the suggested raid and it was tentatively arranged that it would be a Battn. job instead of a Coy. job. "A" Coy. stated they only wanted any revolvers that were captured as they had enough rifles and ammunition, and after some further discussions, the matter was put off until the next meeting of the Battn. Council on the following Friday night. Meanwhile Peadar was to discuss the matter with Brigadier Dick McKee and the 1st Battn. were to arrange for transport to remove the arms when captured to a safe dump. As the 1st Battn. had no reliable fast transport, the 3rd Battn., who had transport, were contacted, and they agreed to provide the transport on conditions that the 3rd Bn. were to be given the Lewis gun and all the ammunition for it. A meeting of representatives of both the 1st and 3rd Battns. was then arranged and the matter was discussed in detail, but the 3rd Battn. still persisted in their claim for the Lewis gun and, unless they got it, they would not provide transport. After a lengthy discussion we, the representatives of the 1st Battn., agreed to the 3rd Battn. claim.

At the 1st Battn. Council meeting on 28th May, Peadar again attended and when the matter of the proposed raid came up for

discussion he asked if arrangements for transport had been agreed on, as he had heard of the 3rd Battalion's claim for the Lewis gun; he was told that after a lengthy discussion with representatives of the 3rd Battn. we had agreed to give them the Lewis gun and ammn. Peadar then announced that both the Brigadier and himself had discussed the matter and had provisionally agreed that their own squad would be the men who would actually carry out the raid and that they would have the support of as many men as possible of the 1st Battn., as it was the 1st Battn. that had first given the information to him and also that the raid would be in the 1st Battn. area. After a discussion with Peadar and all the members of the Battn. Council, we agreed to Peadar's suggestion, and a meeting of all the Battn. Council was arranged for the following Sunday afternoon, 30th May, at 3.30 in 44 Parnell Square. At this meeting final arrangements were made as follows:- Simultaneously at 3.50 p.m. on Tuesday, 1st June, the men who were to be the actual raiding party were to enter the building. These men were George Fitzgerald in charge of Vinny Byrne, Joe Guilfoyle, Jim Slattery, Joe Byrne, Joe Dolan, Bob Baxter, Mick Magee and one other whom I now, after 29 years, forget. George Fitzgerald would have with him Joe Guilfoyle, Vinny Byrne, Jim Slattery and Joe Byrne. They were to come up Henrietta St. and enter the building through the doorway under the arched gateway facing Constitution Hill and Broadstone Station. Joe Dolan and Bob Baxter were to enter the grounds at the gate nearest to the Broadstone Station and Mick Magee and the other man were to enter the grounds at the gate at top of Up. Church St. and these four men were to arrive at the same time as George Fitzgerald and his party in the building and one of them was to disarm the sentry who usually was in the hall of the building. The transport, consisting of two motor cars, was to arrive outside the outer gate of the building at top of Henrietta St. at 4 o'clock sharp. Sean Prendergast, Captain of C/Coy. 1st Battn. was to bring his 12 men into Henrietta St. and post them around to keep the street clear for the transport to get away. Seamus Kavanagh, Captain of H/Coy. 1st Battn., was ordered to bring 12 men up Henrietta St. and enter

the building by the back gate at 3.50 p.m. and prevent any of the military getting away through the rear and I was ordered to give the signal to the men to come up Henrietta St. as soon as the back gate was opened at 3.45 p.m. for the clerks working in the Registry of Deeds to take out their bicycles. At exactly 3.45 I gave the signal and saw George Fitzgerald and his party walking up the street. I went into the building by the back gate and arrived at the passage to the Guardroom the same time as George and his men. He ordered one of the men to take me prisoner and bring me into the Guardroom. The party then walked into the Guardroom and ordered all the military - about 8 or 9 - to put their hands up and turn their faces to the wall. I was also ordered to stand with my face to the wall and the raiding party took from the Sergeant the keys of the rifle rack and the Lewis gun; they collected all the arms and ammunition but left one of the boxes of Mills grenades behind them and marched out of the room and building, but on going through the door in the archway one of them dropped a web bandolier with 25 rounds of .303 in it and the Porter of the building, who was an ex-British soldier, threw it across the saddle of my bicycle which was lying against the wall beside the doorway. When the raiding party had left the Guardroom I wanted to leave, but the Sergeant warned me I would be shot as probably the raiders had left someone behind to see that they were not followed. After a couple of minutes the Sergeant went to telegraph the N.D. Union, but the instrument had gone with the raiders and as I had, previous to the arrival of the party, cut the telephone wires, he was not able to phone the N.D.U. so he took my bicycle and cycled over to the N.D.U. and in about five minutes we had 2 lorry loads of troops who closed all gates and would allow no one to leave until they had been questioned by their O/C. Every one of the staff in the building and myself and 10 of my picket were questioned by the officer and we were then ordered to go. I asked for my bike and the Sergeant told the officer that I had lent my bike to him to report the raid. One of my picket who was out in Henrietta St. at the time of arrival of the raiding party ran off down the street, and Sean Prendergast ordered one of his men to

follow him, but not to molest him unless he was going to give information to the police or military; he was followed to his home in Haddon Road, Clontarf.

Next day, the 2nd June, I, with my picket of strikers, attended as usual at The Registry of Deeds, and about 11.15 a.m. a large military car drove up and 4 officers, all brass hats, got out and entered the building. They had with them the Sergeant of the Guard and he explained to the officers how the guard was overpowered by a raiding party of about 25 men all armed with rifles and revolvers. The Principal Officer, who, the soldiers afterwards told me, was O/C. Dublin Garrison, asked the Sergeant who or what we were and what were we doing there. The Sergeant replied that we were some sort of a strike picket and that I had lent my bicycle to him the previous evening to go to the N.D.U. to report the raid. I was then called by the officer and asked questions of what my business was there and if I could give him a description of any of the raiding party, when I explained why I was there and what we were supposed to be doing he replied with a few choice adjectives about the country in general and Dublin in particular, saying that "here we have law makers, law breakers and law strikers, all bloody well bunched together" and unless he took all then in the building including myself and my picket prisoners, he would never get any information of any value.

So ended the raid on the King's Inns on 1st June 1920.

Signed: Jerry Golden,  
O/C. Cyclists Coy. 1st Bn.  
Dublin Brigade.

6th March 1949.

Annexed is a tracing from O.S. of the building and adjoining streets showing the particular points mentioned herein.

Sgd. Jerry Golden.

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