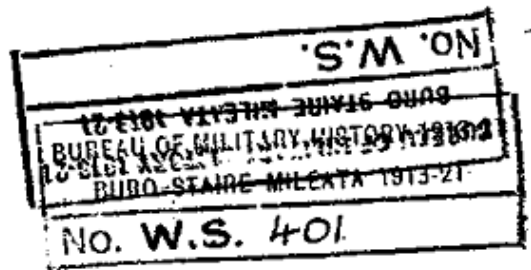


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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 401

Witness

Mr. Peter Gough,
5 Kilbarrack Road,
Sutton,
Co. Dublin.

Identity

Member of Irish Volunteers, Dublin,
1918 - .

Subject

Capture of armoured car, Dublin, and attempted
rescue of Sean MacEoin, 15/5/1921.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil

File No. S.1517

Form B.S.M. 2.

ORIGINAL

STATEMENT OF MR. PETER GOUGH,
5, Kilbarrack Road, Sutton, Dublin.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 401

On being demobilised from the British Army following the 1914-1918 war, my brother, who had already been in the Citizen Army, suggested to me that I should join the Volunteers. He said; "You have been fighting for a foreign country long enough. It's up to you now to fight for your own country". As a result of my brother's suggestion, I joined the Volunteers and became attached to a unit in the Baldoyle Area.

When I came on my first parade, I was asked by my Company Officer if I knew anything about machine-guns. I told him that I had a general knowledge of all types of machine-guns, as I was a No. 1 Gunner in a Machine-Gun Company while I was in the British Army.

At a subsequent date, I was attending a machine-gun parade in North Great George's Street, when Joe Byrne (later Colonel) came to me and asked me if I knew anything about a Thompson gun. I said I knew all about every class of gun. Then he told me that there would be a job coming off and that he would have work for me to do in connection with a machine-gun; but he did not know whether it would be a Vickers or a Thompson.

On Wednesday night in May, 1921, I was mobilised to be at Abbey Street the next morning at a given time. On Thursday, I got a gun from the dump, and proceeded with Tom Keogh and two other men to the abattoir. On arriving there, we were told that the job was off. I did not know, even at this time, what the job was. The same routine took place the next morning.

On the third morning, which was Saturday, we went to the abattoir again. I was with Pat McCrae, and he said; "We are going to try to capture an armoured car, and then attempt the rescue of Seán MacEoin from Mountjoy Jail". I was told to take up a position at one corner of the slaughter shed and to allow no one to approach the armoured car. After some few minutes, Pat McCrae shouted to me to get over to the car quickly. On getting to the car, I noticed Pat McCrae covering a soldier with his gun; and I ordered the gunner out, with mine. We had some little confusion, during which I believe there was a soldier shot. I got into the car with the crew. There were Pat McCrae, who was the driver, Tom Keogh and another gunner, whose name I cannot recall. Pat McCrae asked me to examine the guns, which I did. They were Thompson guns, which were very familiar to me. I noticed the gun was at "automatic". I got around to the other one - Thompson - and I saw it was at "safety". I told the other gunner to change it round to "automatic" - that was "A". Then I told Pat it was quite safe, that the guns were ready for action and would work effectively, provided there was no stoppage; and even if a stoppage did occur, I assured him that I was in a position to get the guns into action again.

With that, we left the abattoir, and proceeded along the North Circular Road in the direction of Mountjoy Jail. We picked up two Volunteers, dressed as British military officers, whom I did not know at the time, but later learned that they were Emmet Dalton and Joe Leonard. We arrived at the gate of Mountjoy Jail. As I was in my gun position in the car, I really do not know what

happened at the gate, but we were not very long delayed until we were inside at the prison. I said to Pat; "For God's sake, try and keep the engine running". It was no place for it to stop, because I knew what we were up against. Pat kept the engine running. There was some confusion inside - some shooting. Who started it, I don't know; whether it was our fellows or the British, I could not say; but there was definitely a soldier shot in the prison. None of our crew was either wounded or missing. We retired out with what we went in - a full crew, including the two officers. What transpired in the jail, I cannot say, as my job was to look after the guns and fire them if ordered to do so; there was no target; therefore, there was no firing from the guns. Before leaving Mountjoy, I am almost sure that a rifle was taken from one of the sentries and also a revolver, as I saw both in the car when we were leaving.

We proceeded along in the direction of Summerhill. I remember there was a long halt somewhere close to Summerhill, where we picked up Mick Lynch who came along with us. My nerve was nearly getting the better of me, and I asked McCrae would they make up their minds quickly as that was no place to stop. I had a fair knowledge of the men they were up against and knew they would move very fast. We proceeded on towards Fairview and up the Malahide road, which neighbourhood was well known to me, as I was reared in the vicinity. When we came to Mount Brown Hill, near Donnycarney, the car was brought to a standstill.

When the car stopped, McCrae asked me could I get the guns out. I said I could, because they were on a ball mounting. I got out my own gun first. I really thought

that an ambush was about to take place, so I told Pat that I could not fire it without the mounting. He asked me to get out the other gun and to try and take all the equipment from the car, that is, ammunition and guns. We put the stuff across the wall at the O'Brien institute. He told me to try and find a dump for it in the safest place possible. We dragged it across the fields, out by the back of Artane, through Justice Reddin's place.

While we were at the back of Artane Schools, an aeroplane came very close to us. Paddy Belton who was with us at this time wanted me to fire the gun at it, as it was so low. I said it would be no good firing at it. I suggested to Pat that we should give the impression that we were workers. We left the guns and ammunition in the middle of the field, and threw our coats over them. We proceeded on through a crowd of the boys of the Institute. Belton asked me what would I do with the stuff, as the plane was still giving us trouble. I said that the best plan would be to take to the ditches. We had not gone very far up one ditch when we came upon an old piping in a drain, and there we dumped the guns and all the equipment.

We retired then to Paddy Belton's place, where I had a wash, a shave and a change of clothes. I proceeded back to Richmond Road, and later went to Lynch's, who lived close by. I met some Volunteer Officer there who asked me to get back to Artane and find out what was really taking place and whether McCrae was captured. McCrae had not come with us, as he remained behind in order to destroy the car. Having got through the cordon of military and Black and Tans, I proceeded on to Killester, to a job I

worked on at the ex-servicemen's houses, collected my money there and returned to Fairview. I could not see any of our men, as they had already gone.

Signed;

Carter Gough

Date;

26. 6. 50

Witness;

W. Denny Bennett.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 401