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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 499

Witness

Patrick Kennedy,
68 Cadogan Road,
Fairview, Dublin.

Identity

Member of Irish Citizen Army 1917 - .
Member of 'D' Company 2nd Batt'n. Dublin Brigade
1918.

Subject

- (a) G.H.Q. Intelligence work 1920;
- (b) Death of Clancy, McKee and Clune;
- (c) Bloody Sunday 21/11/1920.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil

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ORIGINAL

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STATEMENT BY PATRICK KENNEDY

68, Cadogan Road, Fairview, Dublin.

My first association with the National movement was in 1917 when I joined the Irish Citizen Army. About a year later I transferred to "D" Company, 2nd Battalion of the Dublin Brigade. The late Tom Ennis was Battalion Commandant at that time, Dick McKee was Brigadier, Oscar Traynor was Vice Brigadier and Paddy Moran was my Company Captain.

Up to 1919 there was very little activity apart from drilling and attending lectures at night.

G.H.Q. Intelligence:

About the middle of 1920 my Company O.C., Paddy Moran, sent for me and informed me that I had been selected as a suitable man for G.H.Q. Intelligence work. He took me to Oriel Hall in Oriel Street, and there introduced me to Tom Cullen, Liam Tobin and Frank Thornton. They informed me that I had been selected for Intelligence work. They pointed out how dangerous and secret this work was, and that if I was prepared to undertake it I would have to leave my employment as it would be full time work. I told them that I understood the conditions and that I was quite willing to take on any duties allotted to me.

I took up duty almost immediately and reported to Crow Street, and there Frank Thornton gave me my instructions. I was to contact a number of agents who were working under the British crown, and thereafter I

was to keep in contact with them and convey any information that they would give me to the Intelligence Department.

Some of the principal agents I was introduced to were Dave Neligan, Reynolds the Auxiliary and Ned Broy. Others of lesser importance were a waiter in the Gresham Hotel, a porter in the Shelbourne Hotel and a civilian working in the telephone exchange in Parkgate Street, headquarters of the Dublin Command.

I cannot recall the type of information that Dave Neligan or Ned Broy passed out, but I do remember the nature of the information that we received from Reynolds. Reynolds reported the conversations of Auxiliaries describing how they had carried out shootings, who carried them out and who the ringleaders were. He gave us full details as to the perpetrators of the murder of Peadar Clancy, Dick McKee and Clune. He told us that these three men were kicked and beaten first in order to extract information from them. The authorities did not succeed in getting anything from the three men, and as a result they were shot in the Castle. I believe that Captain Hardy and Captain King were two of the British gang implicated in the murders.

Reynolds supplied us with group photographs and individual photographs of Auxiliaries in "F" Company in the Castle. We also had photographs of Hardy and King. In group photographs the individuals that we were interested in were usually marked with an "X", and our Intelligence Officers were instructed to study them closely so that they would be in a position to identify them.

Our agents in different hotels gave us information regarding people who were stopping in the hotels. Any

strangers or suspicious looking people who frequented the hotels' were immediately reported on.

The Director of Intelligence, Michael Collins, was very anxious to find out what progress was being made with regard to the British Intelligence service in the city, and for this reason a careful check was kept on the residents of hotels and of private houses in the city. From the information supplied by our agents, we were satisfied that the British Intelligence system had extended considerably.

Another important agent we had was McNamara of Dublin Castle. We also had several policemen amongst our agents, two of whom I remember were Constables John Kennedy and Terry O'Reilly, both of Fitzgibbon Street station. McNamara kept us informed of the movements and intentions, as far as he knew, of the Auxiliaries. Any instructions that were given to the Auxiliaries from their superiors were passed on to us.

Two important agents we had in the post office in the Rink were Paddy Moynihan and Dermot O'Sullivan. Moynihan was better known to us as "118". He passed out any information that would be of interest to us. I remember on one occasion he sent out word that bundles of "An t-Oglach" which were being sent by Piaras Beaslai' to country districts had been seized and collected within the Rink. We retaliated immediately by going into the Rink armed, holding up the staff and taking the bundles of "An t-Oglach" from them. This operation was carried out by six men; - Liam Tobin, Frank Thornton, the late Tom Cullen, Joe Dolan, Ned Kelleher and myself.

I helped in compiling the list of agents marked down for execution. The information regarding these agents was supplied by our contacts in various hotels,

boarding-houses, private houses, etc.

I remember on occasion when the Director of Intelligence, Michael Collins, instructed me, through Frank Thornton, that a particular letter was going through the post from the British military headquarters in Parkgate Street, and that it was to be intercepted before it reached the Rink. I knew the number of the post office van going from Parkgate Street, and, accompanied by Pat McCrae, we held it up at the junction of Parnell Square and Parnell Street. We seized all the mails in the van. I was informed later that we had succeeded in our mission, as the wanted letter was amongst the many seized.

Bloody Sunday.

On the Saturday before Bloody Sunday I was instructed to report to 100 Seville Place that night where, I was told, I would receive specific instructions regarding an operation to be carried out the following morning. When I arrived at Seville Place that night, I discovered that a number of specially selected men from my Company were present and that Paddy Moran, my Company O.C., was in charge of them.

Seán Russell took charge for that night, and he gave us our instructions for the following morning. He explained that a big swoop was to be made simultaneously on all British agents residing in private houses throughout the city and that the operation was to be carried out at nine o'clock sharp. He detailed Paddy Moran to take his party to the Gresham Hotel and eliminate three British Intelligence Officers who were stopping there. Lieutenant-Colonel Wilde and Captain McCormack were two of the British agents; I cannot remember the name of the third man.

I arranged with Paddy Moran to meet him next morning in North Earl Street. I met him as arranged and we proceeded to the Gresham Hotel. As we entered the hotel the other members of our party, who were in the vicinity, came in after us. Our first job was to disconnect the telephone. As we knew the rooms in which the Intelligence agents were located, our party split up, as pre-arranged, and proceeded to the rooms allotted to them by Paddy Moran. I remained with Paddy Moran while the shootings were taking place. There were people in the dining-room and we took up position at the door and held them there.

Two British agents were eliminated that morning, the third man escaped. He was a Catholic, I believe, and had gone out to early Mass.

The whole operation lasted less than ten minutes.

Lieutenant Noble, British Secret Service Agent.

Following Bloody Sunday two men approached me and told me that they had been contacted by a British Secret Service agent who gave his name as Noble. Noble asked them would they be willing to help the British authorities in their activities against the I.R.A. and told them that he had a private address where he could meet them. He said that he would make it well worth their while if they would assist him.

We knew that Noble's address was 7 Ranelagh Road, where he lived with a lady friend. Joe Dolan was detailed to eliminate him, but when he visited the address for that purpose he found that Noble was not there. His lady friend was still there, and Joe demanded from her the whereabouts of Noble.

Attempts to rescue Sean MacEoin:

Information was received that Sean MacEoin, who was then a prisoner in British hands, would travel from Mullingar to Dublin in an ambulance accompanied by a lorry. We were instructed to intercept this ambulance between Lucan and Leixlip. A number of us travelled to a point decided on between these two places, but after some hours waiting there we got word that the British had cancelled their arrangements and that they were not travelling that morning. We returned to the city, and it transpired later that MacEoin was conveyed to Dublin late at night.

Another attempted rescue was made while MacEoin was in Mountjoy Prison. A number of us were detailed one night to be in the vicinity of the prison at a certain hour. I believe the arrangement was that MacEoin, with the aid of some of the prison warders, was to try and make his way to the main gate, and that on a signal we were to rush the gate and free him. This attempt was called off just before curfew. I heard afterwards that MacEoin was too weak to take part in the escape that was planned.

Activities against enemy agents and spies:

A man named John Ryan, who resided in the vicinity of Gloucester Street, was a military policeman in Dublin Castle and was also, I believe, at one time employed as a batsman to a British Auxiliary officer in the Castle, under whom he served in the British Army in India. Information reached our Intelligence that Ryan was spying on wanted men at night time. Curfew made no difference as far as he was concerned, he could be out at any time during the night. It was established that he was the man who tracked Dick McKee to a house in Gloucester Street,

and that he chalked, by arrangement, the door of the house in which McKee was stopping on the night he was arrested there. The idea of the chalk mark was to guide the Auxiliaries to the house in question. A couple of months after the murder of Dick McKee, instructions were given by the Director of Intelligence that the informer, John Ryan, was to be shot. This order was duly carried out. We knew that Ryan frequented a public-house adjacent to where he resided, and on a morning in February, 1921, I took two squad men there - Bill Stapleton and Jimmy Conroy. Two of us entered the house in question and shot him; the third man remained on guard outside.

Escape of Frank Teeling, Simon Donnelly and Ernie O'Malley from Kilmainham.

At the time that Teeling, Donnelly and O'Malley were in Kilmainham Jail, my Company O.C., Paddy Moran, was also in the same prison. On one or two occasions he sent me a letter through ^{two} friendly soldiers named, I believe, Storkman and Paddy Holland. These letters were delivered to either Farrelly's public-house at the corner of Grafton Street and Stephen's Green, or to Kirwan's in Parnell Street.

I decided that I would further cultivate the friendship of these soldiers, and straight away I made it my business to meet them.

During our second meeting I discussed with them the possibility of getting Frank Teeling out of prison. At that time Teeling was under sentence of death. One of them, who was a very intelligent man, suggested ways and means of getting a number of prisoners out of Kilmainham. These suggestions appeared to me to be too good to be true. I studied them and wrote a report on them to the

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Director of Intelligence. The Intelligence Department also considered them too good to be true, as it was felt that an ordinary soldier could not conceive the ideas put forward. It transpired later that, if we had believed in the suggested plans practically the whole prison could have been cleared. He gave us to understand that he had keys which would open a number of cell doors, and also a master key. He said that whatever night the escape would be decided for he would arrange to have an unfriendly Sergeant in the prison doped. Actually we provided him with the dope for the Sergeant.

His plans, however, were not disregarded. I was instructed to introduce both soldiers to the O.C. of the Dublin Brigade, Oscar Traynor, which I did. I first introduced them to Brigade O.C. on a Sunday night at approximately 10 p.m. at an apartment at the rere of Kirwan's public-house, Parnell Street. I met them afterwards on a few occasions with Oscar Traynor when details of the escape were being discussed.

Oscar Traynor took over from here and made final arrangements for the escape. I am aware that a couple of attempts failed, due to plans miscarrying, but a short time afterwards the three men actually escaped through the active assistance of one of the British soldiers already mentioned. This soldier brought the prisoners from their cells, took them down the yard to the main gate and cut the bolt in the gate with a bolt-cutter supplied by Oscar Traynor. I know definitely that Oscar Traynor did supply this bolt-cutter as I was present when the soldier concealed it on his person. Oscar Traynor informed me at the time that he had tested the bolt-cutter in his home and was sure that it would work.

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It transpired that the soldier effecting the escape saw a favourable opportunity of letting the prisoners out and availed of it, although there was nobody outside to meet them.

Within fifteen minutes of their escape I brought a note to Oscar Traynor at Brigade Headquarters which I received indirectly from one of the escapees. Oscar Traynor was agreeably surprised at their escape.

As a matter of interest, one of the soldiers deserted the British Army afterwards. He burned his uniform and cleared away. The other, who was sentenced to eight years but who was released in 1923, returned to this country and contacted me with a view of getting assistance or employment. Knowing that he was a decent type of man I took it on myself to bring him before Gearóid O'Sullivan, who received him favourably and arranged to have him paid a gratuity of something of I believe between £300 to £350.

General Tudor:

About the end of April, 1921, I was directed by Liam Tobin to submit a report on the possibility of carrying out an ambush between Dunlaoghaire and the City, and to watch and time the movements of the cars carrying high British officers from the Mail Boat to their Barracks. I had the numbers of the cars in question. They were supplied by the Director of Intelligence, who also knew beforehand when certain officers were expected. It was hoped at the time that General Tudor would be met and eliminated if information could be obtained in time that he was travelling.

Intelligence Co-operation with Squad:

I continued on Intelligence work up to the Truce.

The Intelligence section always worked in close co-operation with the Squad.

In the many operations carried out by the Squad, the officer in charge always received his instructions from members of the Intelligence staff. The Squad when out on operations were always accompanied or led by a member of the Intelligence staff. In all cases the wanted men were pointed out by the Intelligence officer, who very often fired the first shot. This close co-operation continued up to the end. As far as I am concerned, both sections worked in complete harmony.

Signed; *Patrick Kennedy*

Date: *30-3-1951*

Witness: *William Jerry Bondi*.

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