

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 561

ROINN



COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 561.....

**Witness**

Matthew O'Callaghan,  
Cait Villa,  
Mountpleasant Road,  
Turners Cross,  
Cork.

**Identity.**

Member of I.R.B. Cork;  
1st Lieut. 'G' Company 1st Battalion  
Cork 1 Brigade, 1917-1921.

**Subject.**

'G' Company 1st Battalion 1st Cork Brigade  
1917-1921.

**Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.**

Nil

File No. ...S.1835.....

Form B.S.M. 2

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'G' COMPANY, 1ST BATTALION, CORK I BRIGADE.

1917-1921.

During the period 1915 to 1919, the above Company underwent various changes as regards the Battalion of which it formed a Unit and it was not until the beginning of 1920 that it belonged to the 1st Battalion, or for that matter became 'G' Company.

From 1915 to 1917 it was 'A' Company of the Cork City Battalion, then on re-organisation, that is, towards the end of 1917 up to the end of 1918 it was 'A' Company, 3rd Battalion. During the remainder of the period up to the Truce it was 'G' Company of the 1st Battalion.

Activities: 1915 to 1917. Parades, drilling and usual Volunteer activities associated with the period.

1918: There was an abortive raid on the military guard at the Courthouse. There was a raid at Jennings, College Road, when a small rifle and ammunition were secured. There was a raid at Dales, Sunday's Well, and a revolver secured. A raid on Bradleys, Kyril St., resulted in a shot gun and cartridges being secured. A raid at Coachford, Co. Cork, brought two shot guns and one rifle. There were the intensive preparations to resist the probable British attempt to impose conscription, resulting in the temporary increasing of strength for a month or so. Outside this brief period the average strength of the Company was 40.

1919: A raid at Captain Clarke's house at Farran, Co. Cork resulted in two shot-guns, two revolvers and ammunition being taken. The Captain resisted and was wounded by revolver fire. A raid at Wellington Bridge brought in a shot-gun, while a revolver was got in a raid at Victoria Cross.

Early in 1919, a bomb factory was established at Grattan St. in Cork, and as well as bombs being manufactured, so were slugs. Haversacks were also made. The grinding of powder was carried out, too, but in April, 1919, this resulted in an explosion and a Volunteer, Lieut. Tobin, died of injuries received. Four other Volunteers were injured also, the Captain - R. Murphy, the Quartermaster - S. O'Connell, P. Varian and F. Downey. Also a member of the Cumann na mBan, Miss C. Moore, was injured. All the injured were removed to hospital and, except for the Lieutenant, had fully recovered in about three months.

During 1919, also, a partly successful attempt was made to blow up the War Memorial at Gillabbey Rock, those engaged being Volunteers Joe Murphy, H. Varian, P. Varian, Frank Russell and Jack Ellard.

In co-operation with 'B' Company, a raid was made on Murray's gun shop and several guns and cartridges were taken.

A raid was made on a ship to secure a wireless set but proved abortive as some of the crew resisted.

In April, two R.I.C. held up Vol. H. Varian in Washington Street, but Varian was armed and in an exchange of

shots one of the policemen was wounded and Varian got away. Fred Murray of 'C' Company was later charged in connection with the shooting.

1920: Twenty-two Volunteers were standing to arms at the Catholic Young Men's Society rooms in Cork for an attack on an enemy night patrol. This patrol did not appear and so the result was negative.

An enemy driver, by name McGregor, was captured and handed over to Brigade.

At Leemount the Company covered the attack on Blarney R.I.C. Barracks. On arrival of an enemy lorry shots were exchanged and the Volunteers got away unharmed.

A suspect was captured and removed to Blackrock Castle as a prisoner.

Friendly members of a boat's crew handed over small arms.

Two enemy lorries were burned at Dennehy's Cross.

In a Battalion operation, the burning of Income Tax Offices on the South Mall.

Twelve members of the Company were engaged in a revolver attack on Auxiliaries in Washington Street, with unknown results.

On 18th November an R.I.C. man was shot dead in White Street. Two Volunteers of the Company were on this job.

1921: A civilian was arrested as a spy and was subsequently executed. Three further spies were arrested and were wounded at the quarry at Asylum Road. This was on 21st May.

Battalion and Brigade operations, not included in this statement, involved participation by members of the Company. In contrast to this, the Company prepared for an attack on the Gaol Guard when passing through Washington Street, when a complete plan was fully made out, removal of captured arms being included too. The operation, however, was not approved by the Battalion and so fell through.

COMPANY OFFICERS.

1917:	Captain:	Seán Scannell.
	1st Lieut.	Seán Hurley.
	2nd Lieut.	Patrick Corkery.
1918:	Captain	Joe Murphy.
	1st Lieut.	Dan Murphy.
	2nd Lieut.	Dick Murphy.
1919:	Captain:	Dick Murphy.
	1st Lieut.	Frank Russell.
	2nd Lieut.	Michael Tobin.

1920: Captain Dick Murphy. (Later T. Twohig).  
1st Lieut. Matt. Ryan.  
2nd Lieut. S. McAlister.

1921: Captain T. Twohig.  
1st Lieut. M. Callaghan.  
2nd Lieut. Frank McMahon.

COMPANY AREA.

The Company Area extended from Donovan's Road, along the Western Road and Washington Street to the South Main St., junction, the Mardyke to North Gate Bridge, North and South Main Streets to South Gate Bridge, right side of Crosses Green - total area between these boundaries.

CASUALTIES.

<u>Killed.</u>	<u>Wounded.</u>	<u>Prisoners.</u>
1	5	35

Lt. M. Tobin - died of wounds - explosion, Grattan St., 1919.  
Capt. R. Murphy - wounded " " " "  
Q.M., S. O'Connell: " " " "  
Vol. P. Varian: " " " "  
Vol. F. Downey: " " " "  
Also Miss C. Moore " " " "  
(Cumann na mBan).

Vol. E. O'Brien - wounded by revolver fire from Black and Tans.

I.R.B.

Nineteen (19) members of the Company were members of the I.R.B. They were M. O'Callaghan, R. Murphy, Joe Murphy, S. Connell, P. Varian, H. Varian, M. Barry, D. Murphy, T. Lehane, J. Breen, M. Ryan, S. Nolan, J. O'Hanlon, F. McMahon, J. Henchion, M. O'Hegarty, D. O'Hegarty, W. Furlong and Seán O'Hegarty, subsequently Brigade C.O.

Signed: Matthew O'Callaghan



Witnessed:

Seán O'Connell

Seán O'Connell Date:

18/July 1951.

ADDENDUM TO STATEMENT OF  
'G' COMPANY, 1ST BATTN., CORK I BRIGADE.

Page I: Para. 4:

Prisoners at the time of the Truce - 35.

Total on Company Roll at Truce approximately 120, which figure includes those interned.

Page I: Para. 9:

One or two members had been to sea, and knew friendly members of the crew of a small merchant ship trading to the Port of Cork. On about three occasions small arms were secured. These included "Peter the Painters" and ammunition. Our member's name was Tom O'Brien. No resistance ever offered. Flag under which she sailed (unknown now) but weapons seemed to come from U.S.A., (accomplices not known).

Page 2: Para. 2.

McGregor was civilian driver for enemy. Considered hostile. Arrested in Company area and handed over to Brigade Intelligence. Interrogated by Brigade Officers and released.

Page 2: Para. 4.

Blackrock Castle used in a limited way, whilst it appeared a safe place. Other Companies did use it, though this is merely an opinion. Suspect released.

Page 2: Para. 7.

Burning of enemy lorries: Entirely a Company job. Not planned. Company on weekly parade observed two lorries of military (small party) stationary at Dennehy's Cross. Enemy unarmed. Our men were detailed to burn the lorries, which they successfully did. No attempt at resistance was offered. After a few revolver shots were fired by our Unit, soldiers ran towards Cork Gaol.

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