

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRE MIL 14 1913-21
NO. W.S. 621

ROINN



COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 621

Witness

Patrick J. Mullen,
26 Harcourt Street,
Dublin.

Identity.

Member of 'C' Company, 4th Battalion, Dublin Brigade,
1914 - ;

Member of Active Service Unit, Dublin, 1920-1921.

Subject.

- (a) National activities 1914-1922;
- (b) Marrowbone Lane Distillery, Dublin,
Easter Week, 1916;
- (c) The Active Service Unit, Dublin 1920-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. S.1868

Form B.S.M. 2

CONTENTS.

	<u>Page.</u>
Easter Week, 1916	1-3
4th Battalion reorganised - raids for arms.	3-4
The Active Service Unit	4
Active Service Unit attack British Intelligence Officers, Bishop St. area	4(a)
A.S.U. attack British Intelligence Officers at Lower Mount Street	5
A.S.U. destroy enemy transport	5-6
Escape of prisoners from Kilmainham Gaol.	6
Attack on Auxiliaries at Ushers Quay.	7
A.S.U. member killed - 21st March 1921.	7-8
A.S.U. attack British Intelligence party, Thomas Street	8-9
British Horse Transport destroyed ...	9
Arrest of Active Service Unit men ...	9-10
Bloody Sunday	10
The Burning of the Custom House	10-11.
A.S.U. raid on Meat Stores	11.

ORIGINAL

STATEMENT BY MR. PATRICK J. MULLEN,

26 Harcourt St., Dublin.

I joined "C" Company, 4th Battalion, Volunteers, in March 1914. Following the Redmondite split, I continued on in the 4th Battalion of the now re-named Irish Volunteers. Tom McCarthy was company commander at the time, and we carried out drills at Larkfield, Kimmage.

Easter Week, 1916.

On Easter Saturday, 1916, I received instructions not to be out of town for the weekend and to hold myself in readiness for mobilisation. I did not know what it was all about, but I strongly suspected that some event of importance was about to take place. I had no orders to parade on Sunday morning.

At about 10 o'clock on Easter Monday morning a mobilisation order was sent to my house instructing me to report to Emerald Square at 12 noon, bringing with me my rations and any armaments and equipment I had. I fell in at Emerald Square at the appointed time. Our company strength was about twenty-five. Captain McCarthy, our company O/C., did not enlighten us very much as to what was about to take place. He simply told us that the battalion was going to occupy various buildings

A short time after midday the battalion moved off under Commandant Ceannt. I found myself with Seamus Murphy, O/C. of "A" Company. This company took over Jameson's Distillery in Marrowbone Lane. In the Distillery Captain Murphy addressed us and for the first time we knew that a rising was taking place. I believe he told us the various buildings and offices which were then occupied by the Volunteers. We were ordered to barricade the distillery as best we could. Arms, in the form of shotguns, were then distributed to the company. The company armament consisted of shotguns and a few Howth rifles.

We barricaded the place with casks, cast-iron plates and any other material we could lay hands on. A trench was dug inside the building near the canal gate. The idea in digging the trench inside was that if the gate was rushed we could take up positions in it and defend ourselves from there.

Seamus Murphy allotted positions to sections and to individual members of the company. Seven of us were sent to a carpenter's shop which was located in a very high building overlooking the South Dublin Union grounds and the canal. Our position could be regarded as an observation post as we had a very clear view from it. Our instructions were that if we saw any British troops approaching we were to fire on them. The view from our position extended well into Cork Street.

Everything was quiet in the Distillery up to Wednesday, when a party of Royal Irish Constabulary was seen marching up Cork Street towards Dolphin's Barn. We opened fire on them and I believe we caused some casualties.

I think it was on Wednesday night or early Thursday morning that the British military succeeded in getting into the grounds of the South Dublin Union. From their position in the Union they opened fire on us in the Distillery. A few of our men received minor injuries as a result of flying bricks. We returned the fire as well as we could. The firing went on spasmodically up to Friday night.

I think it was on Wednesday that the party of Volunteers that occupied Ardee Street Brewery evacuated their post and joined us under Captain Colbert.

Some time on Sunday Commandant Ceannt and, I think, Father Aloysius with a British officer arrived at the Distillery, and we immediately received orders to leave our positions and fall-in in the yard. Commandant Ceannt read an order which

was to the effect that the Volunteers were surrendering their positions and that the fighting was to cease. We were then ordered to collect our equipment and personal effects and to fall-in again.

At about 3 o'clock in the afternoon we marched out of the Distillery and joined the remainder of the battalion. We marched to Bull Alley Road, Patrick Street, where we were instructed to lay down our arms. We were then taken over by a British military escort and marched to Richmond Barracks.

We remained in Richmond Barracks until Tuesday night, when we were deported to England. My destination was Knutsford Gaol. I was later transferred from Knutsford to Frongoch, from where I was released some time in October 1916.

4th Battalion re-organised.

Some time in the Autumn of 1917 a young Fianna boy by the name of Paddy O'Brien approached me and told me that the 4th Battalion was being re-organised and that he was asking all the old members to rejoin their former companies. I said I would rejoin straight away. One of the first meetings I attended was at a hall in Oakley Road. I think the company officers at that time were Garry Byrne, O/C., John Joyce and Pat O'Brien, Lieutenants. I cannot remember what the strength of the company was when it was re-organised, but I believe it must have been in the neighbourhood of 100. Many old comrades of pre-1916 days were missing and replaced by new and younger men.

For a considerable time following the re-organisation of the company, our activities were mainly confined to drills, parades, lectures and practice shooting with miniature rifles. The miniature rifle training was carried out in the sand pits in Crumlin.

I think it was in the year 1919 that company activities

were extended to raiding for arms on private houses. My particular group carried out raids in Palmerston Park area.

We were not very successful; I think we got only two or three shotguns. On the whole, these raids did not provide much material in the way of equipment.

The Active Service Unit.

Late in the year 1920 the company commander approached me and asked me would I like to join the Active Service Unit. This unit was being formed to counter the activities of British forces on the streets of Dublin. When I accepted the proposal, I was instructed to report to Oriel Hall. We were addressed there by Oscar Traynor, who told us why the unit was being formed and what our duties would consist of. In short, the purpose of our joining the unit was to attack British forces in Dublin city at any time during the day or night when the opportunity presented itself. On account of this, we were to be regarded as a full-time unit, and, as we could not continue in our ordinary places of employment, we were to be paid for our services.

We were formed into four sections, the idea being that each section would operate in its own battalion area. Paddy Flanagan was placed in charge of the unit. I was detailed to No. 4 section, and my section commander was M. Sweeney. No. 4 section had different meeting places, but mostly met at Mount Argus brick works. We met from time to time in Jim Nolan's shop in Cork St. We were usually notified by a runner where we were to meet. We were armed with revolvers and grenades.

We had a dump at Portmahon House, Alderman Flanagan's house, near Rialto Bridge, and we had a dump in Ardee Row. At Alderman Flanagan's place the dump consisted of a barrel which was fitted underneath the floor of a stable. Similar arrangements were made with regard to the dump at Ardee Row..

A.S.U. attack British Intelligence Officers -
Bishop Street area.

Early in February 1921, instructions were issued to the section that it was to take up positions in the vicinity of Bishop Street, Kevin Street and Camden Row to ambush a private car coming from Dublin Castle containing British Intelligence officers.

At about 12 noon we positioned ourselves in pairs at the street corners in the vicinity of Bishop St. (This area was known as the Dardanelles). I cannot remember definitely what our instructions were, but I recollect that a member of the Intelligence staff was to give us the signal when to fire on the car. After waiting about half an hour we got the signal, and as the car was passing by our positions, we opened fire with revolvers. The car accelerated. I believe two of the four occupants of the car were wounded.

A.S.U. attack British Intelligence officers at Lower Mount Street.

About a fortnight later, instructions were again sent to us that British Intelligence officers were due to travel by car from Beggars Bush Barracks via Mount Street and that we were to attack the car at Lower Mount Street on a day and time specified. Seven of us took up positions at Holles St. corner and at Grant's Court. This time the signal to fire was to be given by a member of the Active Service Unit, who evidently could identify the car. We had not been waiting long when we got the signal and we opened fire, wounding three of the occupants of the car. A little point worth mentioning here shows how we were assisted by members of the public. As we withdrew from Mount St. we were making for a cul-de-sac. As we entered this cul-de-sac, a lady stepped us and said: "Don't go there. You have no way out". With that, she directed us to another street.

A.S.U. destroy enemy transport.

Shortly after the Mount St. incident, four of us were detailed to proceed to the Grand Canal, James's Street Harbour where one of the canal boats, loaded with flour, was discharging its cargo into military lorries. Our instructions were that we were to destroy the lorries and the boat, if possible. About eleven o'clock in the morning, we arrived at the venue and there held up the two military drivers. We ordered them to drive their lorries about 200 yards along the canal towards Rialto Bridge, where we set them on fire by firing into the petrol tanks. We tried to destroy the boat but failed. We ordered the men who were working on the boat to dump the flour into the canal.

During that same week, two further lorries were destroyed. These lorries were being loaded with bricks or mortar or some such material at the brick works in Dolphin's Barn. We ordered the drivers to drive the cars to the Kimmage Quarry,

where we dumped them into it. The British military returned the next day and succeeded in retrieving one of the cars.

On another occasion, as we were in the vicinity of Bluebell on the Naas road, two British despatch riders were coming along on their motor bicycles. We held them up, and confiscated the bicycles and despatches. The despatches were sent to headquarters and the bicycles were, I think, handed over to a Volunteer unit in the South County Dublin.

Escape of Prisoners from Kilmainham Jail.

Frank Teeling, Simon Donnelly and Ernie O'Malley escaped from Kilmainham Jail on the 14th February 1921. This escape was, in fact, due to take place three nights before it actually did. Three other members of the Active Service Unit and myself were detailed to assist in the escape. On the night of the attempted escape we met in the old Sinn Fein Hall at Inchicore. There, our section commander gave us full instructions as to what we were to do. He handed one of us a rope ladder and told us that, at 8 p.m., we were to go up the laneway by the side of Kilmainham Jail and throw this ladder over the wall, making sure that the end on the outside was made secure. When we got there, we threw the top of the rope ladder over the wall, but somehow or another, the ladder got caught and failed to go completely over the top of the wall. While we were doing this, four soldiers, accompanied by ladies, came on the scene. We saw then that there was nothing for it but to take the party with us. We brought them to the Sinn Fein Club at Inchicore, where they were accommodated overnight. Next morning, we took them to a private house at the Red Cow, where they were held until word reached us that the escape had, in fact, succeeded. We treated the soldiers as best we could and, when they were leaving, they said they appreciated what we had done for them very much. I think they were under the impression that we were going to shoot them.

Attack on Auxiliaries at Usher's Quay.

Sometime in March 1921, Paddy O'Brien, Captain of C/Coy. 4th Battalion, approached four of us who were formerly members of that battalion and told us that the company was staging an attack on Black and Tans and Auxiliaries, who were expected to travel from Westland Row to the Depot in the Phoenix Park. The enemy forces were believed to be new recruits coming over from England by way of reinforcements. He said that the attack would be staged in the vicinity of Usher's Quay and selected men of the company were being mobilised for it. He felt that, since we had already plenty of experience with the Active Service Unit, we could give him good assistance. We accepted the invitation and arrangements were made then as to the time we should report. I think it was for 8 p.m.

On the evening in question, we joined about 12 or 14 men of C/Company at Steeven's Lane. The whole party patrolled down the south quays in more or less extended order, at intervals of about eight or ten paces. As we came to Watling Street Bridge, two lorries of Black and Tans unexpectedly came towards us. We had no time to take up proper positions. We dashed into doorways and from there opened fire with revolvers and grenades on the two lorries. Two grenades actually went into one of the lorries. I believe the attack resulted in quite a number of casualties amongst the Tans and Auxiliaries. We suffered no casualties worth speaking of. One of our party, however, received a bomb splinter in one of his hands.

A.S.U. Member killed - 21st March 1921.

Our section commander, Gus Murphy, was shot by the British military at Clanbrassil Street on the evening of the 21st March 1921. I did not witness this shooting, but another A.S.U. member, who was accompanying him, whose name was Alec O'Toole, told us that on the evening in question

both himself and Gus Murphy were walking up Clanbrassil Street. British military were at the time raiding shops in the area. Two soldiers came out of one shop and apparently collided with the two A.S.U. men. Whatever transpired, one of the soldiers drew his revolver and shot Murphy. When the members of the Active Service Unit heard this news, they became very annoyed and wanted to have reprisals, but the officer in charge gave definite instructions that we were to stay where we were. Gus Murphy was buried in Kilbride and all members of the A.S.U. attended his funeral. The place was surrounded by British military. When the military withdrew, we went into the graveyard and fired three volleys over his grave. Evidently they must have heard the shooting because they returned immediately and searched the horse-drawn carriages in which we were travelling back to town. I may mention we had taken the precaution of disposing of our guns before entering the carriages. However, no arrests were made.

A.S.U. attack British Intelligence Party, Thomas St.

Information reached us, through our Intelligence department, that it was usual for a civilian car conveying members of the British Intelligence staff to travel from Dublin Castle to some of the military barracks on the south side via Thomas St. at a regular hour each day. Eight or nine of us of the A.S.U. were instructed to take up positions in Thomas St. area and attack this car. On the day in question, sometime, I think, about the end of March 1921, we positioned ourselves in pairs at various street corners leading into Thomas St. We knew the number and make of the car, and we had not long to wait when we saw it coming in our direction. As it came to our positions, we opened fire on it with revolvers. The occupants in the car returned the fire, their bullets penetrating beef carcasses hanging up in a nearby butcher's shop, at which place we took cover. From information received later, it was believed that three occupants of the car were

wounded and one killed. In the crossfire, a little girl was killed also.

British Horse Transport destroyed.

In March 1921, the British military used quite a lot of mule transport for transporting military stores to various barracks throughout the city. Orders were issued to the A.S.U. that this transport was to be destroyed. Some time that same month two other members of the A.S.U. and myself held up two drivers in charge of a military wagon drawn by two mules at Market St. We ordered the drivers to dismount from their wagon and shot the two mules.

Word reached us that two British dispatch riders with their motor cycles were in Kingsbridge station. Three of us were sent there and we held up the two dispatch riders, relieving them of their dispatches and motor cycles. The dispatches were handed in to the officer in charge of the A.S.U. Following this incident we destroyed two motor ambulances, one at Donore Avenue, and one in Cork Street. In each case we compelled the drivers to take the ambulances down to Crane St. in the vicinity of Guinness's, where we set them alight.

Arrest of Active Service Unit men.

The British military raided the shop of Nolan's of Cork St. about 5.30 p.m. on an evening late in March. When the military swooped on the place a number of civilians and Volunteers from the 4th Battalion were on the premises. The military held us up and searched us and the shop. They claimed to have discovered a revolver at the back of the shop with the result that two members of the A.S.U. and myself, two men from the 4th Battalion, and two civilians were taken into custody and conveyed to Portobello Barracks. After about a month we were courtmartialled and charged with possession of arms and ammunition which we, of course,

were not in possession of. Presumably it was to cover up for the revolver allegedly found in the back of the shop. The 4th Battalion Volunteers and ourselves refused to recognise the Court. The two civilians, however, who had nothing to do with any Volunteer organisation, were defended by a barrister, namely John A. Costello, T.D. The result was that the whole party of us were found 'Not Guilty' and released.

Bloody Sunday.

On Saturday, 2nd November 1920, a number of us, from the 4th Battalion, were selected for operations against British agents on the following morning. Our instructions were that we were to meet outside Whitefriars St. Chapel on the following morning, Sunday, and we were to proceed to the Standard Hotel where two British agents, Intelligence officers, were staying. I cannot now recall who was in charge of our operation; I believe he was a member of the Intelligence staff, as he was to identify the men who were to be shot. My particular job was to smash the telephone and prevent anyone from entering or leaving the hotel. On our way to the Standard Hotel word reached us that the men we were after were not then in the place and that we could return home as quickly as possible.

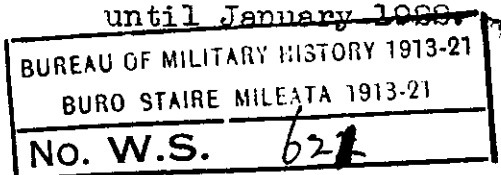
The burning of the Custom House.

I took part in the burning of the Custom House in company with all other members of the A.S.U. and the Squad. On the morning that the Custom House was attacked we assembled at a storehouse in Strand St. We were addressed there by Captain Flanagan who told us that the Custom House was being destroyed at 1 o'clock on that day. He outlined the duties of each section of the A.S.U. My section, No. 4, was to take up a position from the old Tivoli to Butt Bridge on the south quays. Our instructions were that if the Auxiliaries came down the south quays we were to attack them. We were in position at about 12.45. After about a quarter of an hour's wait, five or six lorries of Black & Tans came down the north quay from,

I think, the direction of O'Connell St. We rushed across Butt Bridge and immediately opened fire on them from the corner of Butt Bridge. They returned the fire. Other Volunteer units in position in the vicinity of Beresford Place also attacked. When our ammunition had run out we withdrew. George Nolan and myself got away on a bicycle which we found lying against the parapet of the bridge. We could see the Custom House burning before we left.

A.S.U. raid on Meat Stores.

It was known to us that the British military had quite a considerable quantity of meat in a store in Mill St. and that it was being guarded by police. Instructions were issued that this meat should be confiscated by us. Five members of the A.S.U. and myself commandeered two of Richardson's carrier horse-drawn lorries and drove them to Mill St. where we took the four policemen by surprise, relieved them of their revolvers and ordered the storemen to load the meat on to Richardson's carriers. We drove the horse-drawn lorries away. We went to Richardson's stables in Crumlin where the meat was left for disposal. The second carrier went to Begg's in Crumlin for disposal also. When we unloaded the meat at Richardson's, the Auxiliaries suddenly swooped on us, took us completely by surprise and I got a bash on the head from one of them who took the revolver off me. My two comrades and myself were taken into custody and brought to Portobello Barracks. We were placed in solitary confinement there and, a week later, we were transferred to Arbour Hill when we were again kept apart from the other prisoners. Some days later we were brought before a courtmartial and charged with robbery and sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment. We were incarcerated in Mountjoy prison where we were kept until January 1933.



Signed:

Patrick Mullen
(Patrick Mullen)

Date:

27/11/1951

Witness: William Ivory *bonnet*