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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
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No. W.S. 663

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 663.....

Witness

Joseph Dolan,
60 Ellesmere Avenue,
North Circular Road,
Dublin.

Identity.

Member of 'A' Company, 1st Battalion,
Dublin Brigade 1917 - ;

Member of G.H.Q. Intelligence, 1920.

Subject.

Military activities, Dublin, 1920.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No...S.1954.....

Form B.S.M. 2

Statement by Joseph Dolan,

60 Ellesmere Avenue, North Circular Road, Dublin.

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STATEMENT BY JOSEPH DOLAN,

60 Ellesmere Avenue, North Circular Road, Dublin.

I was one of the first to join "A" Company of the 1st Battalion when it was re-organised about 1917. I was attached to the Gaelic League at the time.

The Squad could not do Intelligence work as well as Squad work, and it was decided to get Intelligence Officers who would not be mixed up with the shootings of the Squad. For this purpose they were looking for men from each Battalion. Liam Tobin and myself were the first Intelligence Officers, but I was the first paid Intelligence Officer. I was sent from the Battalion to Intelligence Headquarters at 144 Pearse Street. I was a student at the time.

Shooting of Assistant Commissioner Redmond:

The first real Intelligence job I was on was the shooting of Assistant Commissioner Redmond who had been sent here from Belfast to re-organise the "G" Division, and had brought some of his own staff with him from Belfast. When he came to Dublin his apartments in Dublin Castle were not ready for him, and he was stopping in the Standard Hotel. A detective in the Castle named McNamara, who was working with our Intelligence, gave us information about Redmond.

We were after Redmond for about a fortnight, trying to get him on his way from the Castle to the Standard Hotel. We could have got him in the morning on his way to the Castle from the Standard, but at that period Collins did not want any daylight shooting. I used to be watching for him outside the Castle. I had his description and more or less knew him. He was a tall man and used to wear a hard hat and a black coat with a black velvet collar. He had two overcoats, the

second was a grey one. He was easily identified and could not be mistaken on the street.

One evening I saw Redmond coming down from the Castle but he turned back and went in again. Paddy Daly, Tom Keogh, Vinny Byrne and myself were waiting and Redmond came out again. Tom Keogh turned to Vinny Byrne and myself and told us to cover them off. Redmond went straight up Dame Street, Grafton Street and Harcourt Street, and we followed him. Just as he came as far as Montague Street Paddy Daly pulled out his revolver and shot him under the ear and Tom Keogh pulled out his revolver and shot him in the back. Daly and Keogh carried out the execution, and Byrne and myself acted as a covering party for them.

The area was full of British military and Air Force men, but no attempt was made to follow us and we got away.

Shooting of Sergeant Roche:

Sergeant Roche was in the R.I.C. stationed in Tipperary, and when Seán Treacy was killed he was brought up specially from Tipperary to identify the remains.

Dave Neligan gave us information about Roche and told us that he would probably be going from the Depot in the Park to Dublin Castle at three o'clock on a Sunday evening. Tom Keogh, Jim Slattery, Frank Thornton and myself mobilised and Dave Neligan was with us. We had a covering party as well. The four of us were more or less together, but I was detailed to carry out the job.

At three o'clock Roche and another policeman came along, and Dave Neligan, who was waiting where the Sligo Hotel is now, stopped them and started chatting to them. We had arranged with Neligan that when he would see Roche he would

take his handkerchief out of his pocket and wave it, and he gave us the signal, although we had already got a description of Roche from Neligan.. At that time repairs were being carried out on the bank premises at the corner of Capel Street and scaffolding poles were erected, so that there was room for only one person to pass at a time. The two policemen were coming towards us and we let them pass us. Then I took out my revolver and put six bullets into Roche when he was just in front of me in the passage-way. Tom Keogh and Jim Slattery put a few more bullets into Roche. The other policeman ran to the Castle and handed in his resignation immediately.

Sergeant Roche had identified the remains of Seán-Treacy in the Richmond Hospital before we shot him, and Dave Neligan told us that at the hospital Roche said, "Yes, that is the so-and-so all right".

Raid on Rink:

Captain Moynihan was an Intelligence Officer and had an Intelligence section in the post office. He gave information to Collins that covering letters for the Dáil Bonds were in the Rink and that the British military were coming to take them away. He told us that the letters were in a basket in the Rink, gave us the location of the basket and said that it should be taken away immediately at all costs.

Paddy Kennedy, Dan McDonnell and myself were detailed to go and seize the basket, which we were to hand to one of our own messengers. We went to the Rink, went straight to where the basket was and whatever officials were there we kept them covered and held them up. I gave the basket to the young messenger, who ran out of the Rink with it. It was brought to Mary Street.

Just as we were leaving the Rink a double-turret armoured car

arrived to take away the letters. It was a lightning raid, and if we had been a minute later getting away we would have been captured.

Shooting of Doran, Wicklow Hotel:

We used to go round to maids and boots in the different hotels and get information from them. Collins got information from Paddy O'Shea that Doran was giving information to the British. Collins used to dine in the Wicklow Hotel regularly and was satisfied that Doran was a British agent.

There was a delay in executing this spy, we had been trying to get him for a fortnight, and Tobin turned to me one day and asked me would I carry out the execution. I said I would if I got Dan McDonnell to go along with me, so the two of us were detailed to carry out the job.

Dan McDonnell already knew Doran, and the two of us walked to the door of the hotel and asked for Paddy O'Shea. Just then Doran came out of one of the rooms, I think it was the dining-room, and Dan McDonnell said, "That's Doran". I produced my revolver and shot him through the head and the heart, and McDonnell shot him through the stomach. We had a covering party and we had no difficulty in getting away.

Raid on the Rink:

This was a raid for State mails. There was a special office in the Rink for State mails only. I was the Intelligence Officer for the job, and I was detailed to go into the Rink, through the Cavendish Row side, one minute before the rest of our party. I had Billy Stepleton and Jimmy Conroy with me. In the Rink they had an alarm 'phone and I had been told where the alarm 'phone was.

We were at the Rink at seven o'clock in the morning, and the night before the raid I synchronised my watch with

Oscar Traynor's watch. He was in charge of the main body and was to come in at the back, the Parnell Square side, with the main body.

At one minute to seven o'clock I moved forward with Billy Stapleton and Conroy. I put Stapleton at the door to guard it and I brought Conroy with me to the alarm 'phone. I wanted to make sure where the alarm 'phone was, and the sorters pointed it out to us. It was on the wall and anybody could pick it up. I got Conroy to guard the alarm 'phone and I moved forward to the desk where the State mails were. I held up three clerks who were there. When I had the clerks held up Oscar Traynor and the rest of our party arrived down the chute and came across to where they saw me in the office.

My job was done then and the State mails were captured. There was consternation in Dublin Castle over this raid, which took place in the summer of 1920.

We were looking for a British Intelligence Officer named Hardy for months. He had an artificial leg and was very vicious.

McNamara gave us information that Hardy was going to England on leave, but did not know whether he would have a heavy escort to Dun Laoghaire. I located Hardy on the mail boat. I was better dressed than he was and I was travelling first class. I tracked Hardy all the way to London, but when we arrived there he disappeared in a taxi. I did not know what date Hardy would be returning to Ireland, but I was to watch for him at Euston Station and wire to Vaughan's Hotel in Dublin as soon as I found out the date of his return. I was to put on the wire, "Josephine travelling".

Eventually when Hardy did travel I sent the wire to Vaughan's Hotel. They got the wire all right and sent out a

party next morning to deal with him. Through some hitch, I think the car broke down, the party did not reach their destination and Hardy got away. He was never got.

Incidentally Vaughan's Hotel was raided. I suspect that they had me under cover.

Shooting of Alan Bell:

Alan Bell was a Resident Magistrate who came from the North of Ireland to Dublin to locate the Dáil Funds, which were in the bank, and it was decided that he should be executed. He was carrying out his investigations in the Four Courts, and we often waited to get him when he would be passing between the Castle and the Four Courts.

We had no possible means of identifying him until the "Irish Independent" published his photograph.

We discovered that he was living in Monkstown and that he travelled in to Dublin on the Dalkey tram. He used to get off the tram at Cooks, opposite Trinity College, where he would be met by two detectives who escorted him from there to the Castle.

On the morning fixed for his execution Tom Keogh went out to Monkstown on his bicycle, and Liam Tobin, Mick McDonnell, Vincie Byrne, Joe Guilfoyle, Owen Cullen and I waited at the corner of Ailesbury Road to carry out the job. After waiting for some time we saw Tom Keogh cycling towards us as fast as he could go, and he reached us just before the tram did. He was breathless and pointed out the tram to us. I got on to the tram and went inside and Vincie Byrne went on top. Joe Guilfoyle was with me, and Mick McDonnell and Tobin were together. Mick McDonnell and Tobin were sitting

opposite Alan Bell and McDonnell leaned across and said to Bell, "Are you Mr. Bell?", and he said he was. Tobin and Mick McDonnell caught him by the shoulders immediately and brought him out to the platform of the tram. Joe Guilfoyle pulled the trolley off the wires and stopped the tram at the corner of Simmonscourt Road. I jumped off the tram to cover it in case any detectives would interfere. Tobin and Mick McDonnell shot Bell, and we escaped down Simmonscourt Road into Donnybrook.

Raid on the King's Inns, 1st June, 1920:

The Dublin Brigade had information that the British guard stationed in the King's Inns were in possession of rifles, Lewis guns, and the quota of ammunition for same.

It was decided by Brigadier Dick McKee and Vice-Brigadier Peadar Clancy that the Brigade should attempt to seize same. Although I was an Intelligence Officer attached to G.H.Q. I was asked by Vice Brigadier Peadar Clancy to report on the situation.

I returned favourable reports. The job was held up for two days owing to the inclemency of the weather, as we wanted all the soldiers to be in the Guard room instead of wandering around the grounds. On 1st June I came back from the King's Inns and reported to the Brigadier and the Vice-Brigadier that the time for action was ripe.

I was already selected by Dick McKee and Peadar Clancy to deal with the sentry, as I had experience of such raids, such as the raid on Collinstown Aerodrome, the raid on the Rink, etc

The plan formed and carried out was: Joe Dolan timed for one minute before the raiding party to engage and disarm the sentry. The raiding party consisted of Tom Keogh, Jim Slattery, Joe Guilfoyle and George Fitzgerald, followed by

members of the Dublin Brigade.

The raid was carried out without a hitch, according to plan. Twenty-five rifles, two Lewis guns and several thousand rounds of ammunition were captured.

The transport who brought away the ordnance were Billy Fitzgerald, Jimmy Fitzgerald, Davy Golden, escorted by Tom Keogh and the raiding party. I had the honour to be the first man in and the last man out.

Kidd's Restaurant, 24th June, 1921:

At this time great numbers of Auxiliaries paraded up and down Grafton Street in civilian clothes and frequented Kidd's restaurant which was at the corner of Grafton Street. Michael Collins decided that there should be an attack on the Auxiliaries in this restaurant and in Grafton Street. The job was timed for the afternoon. This was the time the greatest numbers of enemy troops would be strolling in Grafton Street. The idea was to nail the whole lot in one blow. These were well known to the Intelligence Section, and the Intelligence Section were on the job. The Active Service Unit were also on the job, but some of them did not arrive having been cut off by patrols. On the firing of a shot by me all were to shoot every Auxiliary seen in Grafton Street. Myself with six others were to go into Kidd's restaurant, but as I have already mentioned some of the Active Service Unit couldn't turn up to me as they were cut off by military patrols, and the same thing happened in certain parts of Grafton Street. We had arranged to have a Ford Van to take away our wounded and that couldn't turn up either. It was also cut off. Because all these things happened it was decided to call the whole thing off. Just as it was called off two members of the Active Service Unit shot two Auxiliaries called Appleby and Waring. We didn't do any

shooting in Kidd's Restaurant at all.

Raid on Collinstown Aerodrome, 20th March, 1919:

Peadar Breslin, who was employed in Collinstown as a labourer, got the idea of doing this job. His intention was to get the key of the storeroom in which the rifles were kept. We met in Columcille Hall in Blackhall Street. At that meeting Tom Byrne suggested the raid and Kit O'Malley laid the plans for it. "A" and "F" Companies were mixed for the job. Paddy Houlihan was in charge and Peadar Breslin was second in charge. I was in "A" Company at the time. There were two Airedales which were used as watchdogs at the Aerodrome. They knew the British Army men ^{and} would not touch them, but any persons in civilian clothes they would attack. The first part of the plan was to poison these two dogs. The men working as labourers were to do this job. The dogs had been poisoned but the poison hadn't taken full effect. "A" Company were allotted the back of the Aerodrome and "F" Company the front. We walked past the dogs which were not now vicious and when I went in a soldier was asleep lying across the back door. We just stepped over him. As a matter of fact all the guard was asleep. We took the front and the rear of the guardroom, disarmed the guard and took their rifles. We got 72 rifles and ammunition. We tied up the members of the guard. We had cars. The cars with the rifles got back to town alright but the one I was in broke down and we had to walk back. This was the first and biggest raid on a military camp for arms. Kit O'Malley was responsible for the organisation of the raid. He worked as a pay clerk in Collinstown at the time. The operation would not have been successful had it not been for Kit.

Bloody Sunday:

I was one of the organisers of that. I was in the Intelligence Section and was sent round all the hotels and boarding houses collecting information from waiters and footmen and others. I had supplied 75% of the information for this job. I got all the information I needed from the staff of the hotels I visited. There were 40 men to be executed that morning. I was also actively engaged in the operation. I was out in Ranelagh with Dan McDonnell at the house of Lieutenant Noble at 9 o'clock but he had left the house at 7 o'clock. The operations were carried out in all the areas as arranged except the 1st Battalion area. Of the 40 who should have been shot only about 17 were actually. Coming back from Ranelagh we met Tom Keogh. He was bringing along Bill McClean who had been wounded. They had been in Mount Street. I helped Tom Keogh to bring Bill back to North Richmond Street where he lived.

Jameson alias Byrnes: 2nd March, 1920:

Liam Tobin told me he himself would be in d'Olier Street at a certain time talking to a man whom he described to me. I was to take particular stock of this man and be able to recognise him again. I went along and saw the man and I made sure I would know him again. I took particular note of him. Two days after that Tobin told me he was going to be done in. I was to meet Paddy Daly by arrangements on the previous day outside Brennans and Walshs in O'Connell Street. We both had bicycles. We were to go out to Ballymun and pick out a place where we would shoot him. We cycled out to Ballymun and picked out a place in Lovers Lane. Paddy Daly, Tom Kilcoyne and Ben Barret were to carry out the execution. On the day of

the execution Tom Kilcoyne, Ben Barret and myself met outside Gardiner Street Church and proceeded on bicycles to the place of execution as pre-arranged. Paddy Daly met Jameson and brought him out to see Collins as it were. When he came along the road I identified him to Barret and Kilcoyne. We held him up and searched him and took all his documents. Paddy Daly stayed back and didn't take part in the search. Just as I was cocking my revolver he said, "If you shoot me, you shoot one of your best boys". The documents found on him were incriminating. When Liam Tobin and Tom Cullen saw Jameson being taken away by Paddy Daly they searched his room in the Granville Hotel and they took all his effects away. They were very incriminating. It was told afterwards that Sir Basil Thompson said when Jameson was shot that he had lost one of his best men.

Shooting of Brian Fergus Molloy, 24th March, 1920:

Molloy was in the British Army in G.H.Q. in Parkgate Street. He was a private. I was introduced to him by Liam Tobin. I was to meet him up in Grafton Street in the Grafton Bar. Coming out in the evenings he was always unusually well dressed in civilians. He was supposed to bring us out information of importance. I left him in the Grafton Street Bar and then I followed him to see where he went. These were my instructions. I discovered he went back to Parkgate Street. Because of information Collins had obtained about this man, he decided that he must be executed. An appointment was made with Molloy and Liam Tobin outside the Cafe Cairo (which was in Grafton Street). This was a great meeting place for those blokes. Tobin didn't turn up, by arrangement. Mick McDonnell and Tom Keogh had been detailed to shoot him. Joe Guilfoyle and myself were the covering party. When Molloy got tired waiting he moved off down Wicklow Street with four of us at his heels, and when he got to the end of Wicklow Street we fired. We got him.

Shooting of Dalton outside Black Church, 20th April, 1920:

Dalton was a detective who watched the trains coming into the Broadstone. He would arrest I.R.B. men coming from the West. It was decided that he should be shot. Mick McDonnell, Tom Keogh and Jim Slattery were detailed to shoot him. Vinny Byrne and myself were to be the covering party. He was going in company with another detective at 11.30 in the morning towards the Broadstone to meet a train.. It was Mick McDonnell, Jim Slattery and Tom Keogh ^{who} opened fire on him. He had a steel waistcoat on him. He always wore this for protection. He was badly wounded when they fired on him and was taken to the Mater Hospital where he died at 3 o'clock.

Signed: Joseph Dolan
(Joseph Dolan)

Date: 24th March 1952
24th March 1952.

Witness: Joseph Kearns Comdr.
Joseph Kearns, Comd't.

