

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S.

875

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 875.....

Witness

James (Seamus "Bawn") Duggan,  
22 Bohermore,  
Galway.

Identity.

Second Lieut. Claregalway Coy.  
1st Battalion Galway Brigade,  
I.R.A. 1921.

Subject.

Kilroe Ambush, Co. Galway,  
19th January, 1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. S.2176.....

Form B.S.M. 2

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## S T A T E M E N T

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by Séamus "Bawn" Duggan,

22, Bohermore, Galway.

KILROE AMBUSH.

Early in 1921 I was 2nd Lieutenant of the Claregalway Company 1st Battalion Galway Brigade, Irish Republican Army. Martin Grealish was Company Captain, and Martin Fahy was 1st Lieutenant. Brian Molloy was O/C of the Battalion, Thomas (Baby) Duggan was Battalion Q. M.

At that time the Black and Tan terror reached its highest in causing destruction and death all over the country. The combined Companies of Claregalway, Castlegar, Creggmore and Annaghdown planned to strike a blow into the hearts of the enemy. On the night of January 17th the Claregalway and Castlegar Volunteers held a secret meeting at the Claregalway cemetery, this particular spot being selected for discretional purposes, firstly to hoodwink the peelers who were very observant at the time and secondly in case of arousing suspicion from the public point of view. This meeting was presided over by Thomas "Baby" Duggan, now deceased R. I. P. Among those present were Brian Molloy, Battalion O/C. Baby Duggan Q. M. and Michael Newell. The Claregalway Company was represented by Martin Grealish, Captain; Martin Fahy 1st Lieutenant and myself, Séamus "Bawn" Duggan 2nd Lieutenant.

The following from the Castlegar Company were present: Jack Mulroyan, William Mulroyan, brothers, Dan Fallon, Pat Broderick and Peter Broderick, who was

and  
a native of Peterswell/was working in Castlegar at the  
time.

The Cregmore Company was represented by Michael  
Conway, Captain; Martin Cullinane, Pat Forde, John  
Grealish and John Egan.

The meeting decided to ambush the enemy near Kilroe  
on the Headford-Galway road, which road was used  
frequently by the enemy. It was quite usual for the Tans  
to leave Galway every Tuesday for Headford as it was  
market day there. It was also decided that Baby Duggan  
would take charge of the entire operation.

After the meeting the volunteers proceeded to  
Aughclogheen, avoiding the main roads as much as possible.  
At the above mentioned place they were joined by the  
Annaghdown Company under the leadership of Tommy Kelly.  
The weather at this particular time of the year was  
bitterly cold, causing great hardship on the men concerned.  
It now was ten O'clock at night and the entire companies  
retired into an old disused house. We were drenched to  
the skin and had nothing to eat. We slept on the  
concrete floor for the night.

It was decided to occupy positions on both sides  
of the road some distance on the Carrundulla side of  
Kilroe. This particular spot was selected as it was a  
quiet countryside; also as it was wooded on either side  
of the road and had a good cover for retreat. At 6.15  
a.m. on the morning of 18th January, the party left  
Aughclogheen and proceeded across country to the spot  
selected for the ambush. All plans now being complete,  
the men took up their positions together with two scouts  
who were stationed some two hundred yards on Carrundulla  
side of Kilroe. The purpose of those scouts or outposts

was that they were to give the alarm of the approaching enemy. We placed ourselves between five and ten yards apart on both sides of the road. It was now 9 o'clock in the morning and as already stated "Baby" Duggan was to lead the attack. Everything was now in readiness bar the shortage of arms as quite a few of the volunteers were very poorly equipped but nevertheless their hearts were strong and brave for any emergency. There were between 40 and 45 men engaged in the attack. Their names and the companies to which they belonged I will give later. I was armed with a rifle and had 7 rounds of ammunition for it. 5 or 6 others also had rifles and about the same amount of ammunition as I had. Most of the others had shot guns with a fair supply of cartridges and a few had revolvers. Michael Newell and Baby Duggan had a few hand grenades each. At 9.40 a.m. a lorry load of Tans and Auxiliaries was sighted bearing fifteen in number together with a machine gun and all modern equipment. The scouts gave the signal, the lorry rounding a sharp curve had to slow down somewhat but, to make matters very awkward for the attackers, a man with a horse and cart arrived on the scene from the Currandulla direction almost in line with the lorry. There was no time to be lost. "Baby" Duggan hurled a bomb point blank at the lorry but missed by inches. The terrified horse bolted from the effects of the explosion. Fearing that the man with the horse might be hit, most of our men refrained from firing for some seconds. This proved a great advantage for the Tans as it gave them sufficient time to dismount and to take cover under the lorry - a most ideal place. A terrific duel lasted for thirty minutes in which eight of the Tans were wounded, some seriously, whilst one of the attackers, namely Charles Quinn, received a

rather serious wound to his hand and fingers. As ammunition supplies were now being exhausted the Volunteers were forced to retire. The Tans realising the Volunteers predicament used their machine gun viciously, but fortunately, not one of its bullets found their mark, all the men getting away without a scratch, except the man already mentioned, who was wounded in the early phase of the fight. Having made good their escape the Volunteers eventually turned eastwards towards "Cnoch Maodh" having half-linked, half-carried their wounded comrade who was now growing weak from loss of blood. Paddy Mullins, then a medical student at U.C.G. had rendered first aid. The men themselves exhausted from hunger and exposure were feeling the ordeal. Their next obstacle was to communicate with Dr. Paddy Fallon then dispensary doctor of Turloughmore to dress Charley Quinn's wounds. To myself and Martin Grealish fell this tedious task, who in our efforts failed to locate Doctor Fallon who apparently was gone on a sick call. All arrangements had been made previously to meet the wounded man at the Clare-Galway Castle, but fortunately enough Mrs. Sabina Long of Kiniska ~~having~~ placed her house at Charley Quinn's disposal. There he was put to bed. Also this kind hearted woman gave stimulants and whiskey to help the recovery of the wounded volunteer. I having gone on my second errand to Twomileditch with a despatch for Dr. Fallon who was visiting some relatives on his way out from Galway City, the doctor arrived at Mrs. Long's on the early morning of January 19th where Charley Quinn finally received professional medical attention. It was not considered safe to keep him in one place for long as the Tans were scouring the district for wounded men, <sup>and</sup> that same evening he ~~was~~ removed to Michael Murphy's in Gortaclera where he remained for about two weeks. It

happened, however, that Dr. Michael O'Malley was attending a patient nearby. A few of the Volunteers made arrangements with him to have the wounded man removed secretly to his private nursing home. It was quite customary for the Doctor to be attending patients in various parts of the country and finally he got him removed to his nursing home without arousing the slightest suspicion. All went well for nine days until the British authorities got information as to his whereabouts which led to the home being raided and with much difficulty, Charlie Quinn made his escape through a back window with the assistance of members of the staff. That same night he was assisted to a County Council van in Shantallo where he remained for two nights. Two of the local Volunteers very courageously <sup>then had</sup> ~~having~~ him secretly conveyed in a pony and trap to the dugout in Creggboy, Claregalway, where he remained until the truce of July of the same year.

The names of the Volunteers and Companies taking part in the ambush are as follows:-

Claregalway Company:

Martin Grealish (Captain)  
 William Coady  
 (Myself) Séamus "Bawn" Duggan  
 John Lynskey  
 John Lally  
 Thomas Fox  
 Martin Fahy (deceased)  
 Charlie Quinn  
 Nicholas Murphy (deceased)  
 John Egan  
 Pat Feeney  
 Seán Vaughan

Castlegar Company:

- Thomas "Baby" Duggan (in Command - deceased)
- Michael Newell
- Bryan Molloy
- Pat Broderick
- Tom Mullroyan
- John Mullroyan (deceased)
- Dan Fallon
- Paddy Mullins (deceased)
- Martin Skerritt
- Thomas Carr
- Patrick Giles
- Michael Broderick

Creggmore Company:

- Michael Conway (Captain)
- Pat Forde
- John Grealish
- John Conway
- Patrick McGrath (deceased)

Annaghdown Company:

- Thomas Kelly (Captain)
- John Melia
- Malachy Healy (deceased)
- Thomas Cunningham
- John Cunningham
- Patrick O'Brien
- Michael Monaghan (deceased)
- Martin Skerritt (deceased)
- Michael Hession Patrick O'Neill
- Martin Moylan (deceased) Michael Fahy

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Signed James Duggan  
 Date 25<sup>th</sup> June 1955 (James Duggan)

Witness: Sean Brennan, Lieut. Col.  
 (Sean Brennan) Lieut. Col.

25th June 1955.