

W.S. 898

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21
No. W.S. 898

ORIGINAL

ROINN  COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.
STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 898.....

Witness

Sean Brunswick (deceased),
Late of 32 Manor Street,
Dublin.

Identity.

Member of 'G' Company, 1st Battalion,
Dublin Brigade, 1917 - ;
Second Lieutenant same Company, 1921 - .

Subject.

Activities of 'G' Company, 1st Battalion,
Dublin Brigade, 1917-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. S.2202.....

Form B.S.M. 2

8. Husley Crescent, Cork St.,
Dublin.

Comdt. M. F. Ryan.

ORIGINAL

Dear Sir: I enclose account of
service from 1914 to 1923. given by the late
Sean Brunswick "S" Leo 1st Bat' Dublin Brigade.
when applying for service certificate.

He was awarded a service certificate
for service from 1917 to 1923.

I got a loan of it from his widow
and if it is any use, you can take a
copy. I am prepared to vouch that it is
correct.

Yours sincerely
N. Laffan

8. Hussey Crescent, Cork St.

For attention of Comdt. Ch. F. Ryan.

Dear Comdt.

In reply to your letter.
Miss. Sean Brunswick's address is 32.
Mano St.

I only had a loan of the statement
made by her late husband, and did not
say I was lending it to your Bureau. It was
only when I read it that I thought it might
be of some help to you.

I told her I would return it in a few days.
If you require any further particulars. give
me a ring at the Gas Co 71811. any morning
before 11. a. m. Yours Sincerely,
N. Laffan,

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Statement by Seán Brunswick (deceased)

late "G" Company 1st Battalion Dublin Brigade.

1917-18:

I joined "G" Company Battalion 1 in March 1917. I attended all Company parades indoor and outdoor and took part in Thomas Ashe's funeral. I was ordered to go to South Armagh to work in election there.

1918-19:

I was appointed Squad Leader by Capt. McGuirk. I attended all parades of Company and N.C.O.s' class. I took part in funeral of Dick Coleman, also funerals of Mrs. McDonough and Pierce McCann. I took part in raid on College of Surgeons to capture arms belonging to O.T.C. who, we were told, used to train there. I was among the armed guard on Mansion House and helped in the return of Seán McGarry from prison. For the rescue of R.C. Barton from Mountjoy prison I was detailed by Capt. Clancy as first to take up position in charge of P. Gilsean and T. Dunne and await the throwing of a stone from over the wall, then to take one side of *ring* into which Barton was to drop. This job was successful. I also participated in rescue of 21 prisoners on 29th March 1919, which was effected by the use of a rope ladder outside pegged to the ground. I was on outpost duty on locks at lockkeeper's house. This job was also successful.

1919-20:

I was appointed Section Commander of No. 3 Section.

I attended all Company parades indoor and outdoor, also Section Commanders' classes at 44 Parnell Square and Colmcille Hall, Blackhall St. I took part in the following active operations: - attempted raid on ammunition and troop train at Ashtown station, detailed off by Capt. Clancy to go with Frank Bolster and hold up the signal man, who told us while we were there that the train we were expecting at 6 o'clock had arrived an hour earlier than expected. This job failed. I received a mobilisation order to meet Capt. Clancy in his shop, the Republican Outfitters, Talbot St., on Sunday morning, who instructed me to mobilise about 25 or 30 men, including Company Officers, N.C.O.s and men, to parade at 45 Parnell Square that evening. Capt. Clancy told me we were going to smash up the Irish Independent machinery unless they complied with certain instructions. I was ordered to hold up the sub-editor's office and remain there after Capt. Clancy had been refused his demands. I was in the office about 40 minutes. This was successful. I later entered a special squad.

Armed patrol duty November 1919:

We were ordered to watch any people taking films of Lord French taking the salute at College Green. If any were seen we were to capture and destroy them as they were to be used for propaganda purposes in England and America. Some were seized and destroyed. Later I was ordered to report to Capt. Clancy, who detailed me to meet him that night armed. I met him that night, Saturday, and with other members of the Battalion we patrolled the streets looking for a favourable opportunity to arise to open fire on the D.M.P. and R.I.C. who were patrolling the streets in large numbers and all carrying arms. The opportunity didn't arise that night.

The following Monday night I was to meet him again armed, and with him and other members of the Company we patrolled the streets - O'Connell St., Westmoreland St. and Grafton St. We were trying to get the police to a particular spot, namely the lane leading from Aston Quay beside McBirney's into Fleet St., to open fire on them. We didn't succeed in this ruse, but when going up Fleet St. we ran into an officer and two soldiers from the telephone exchange armed. When Capt. Clancy ordered us to disarm them, which we did, we got 2 short Lee Enfield rifles and a .45 Webley revolver. Capt. Clancy told me to take them away. I brought them to my house. They were concealed beneath the overcoats of J. Dodd and M. Downes (who was killed in the Free State Army). The rifles were left with me for a period until Capt. Clancy made arrangements to collect them.

Attempted raid on Amiens St. Post Office:

For four Saturday nights previous to the raid Capt. Clancy and I met and tried to find out which was the best time to go on the raid, and judging by what we saw it was decided that 4 o'clock in the morning was the best. The following Saturday we met at the Banba Hall where a céilí was in progress, and went from there to Killarney St. and down to an archway facing the Post Office. Two men were detailed to hold up the office. I was to enter after them and hold up the sentry who was behind the door leading from the office, and Capt. Clancy was to lead the remainder of the men into the guard room. That was the arrangement, but when crossing the road towards the office the lights went on in the guard room. Capt. Clancy then told us to go back to the archway, from where we were ordered back to the Banba Hall. This job failed. I was now appointed Senior Sergeant.

Raid on Army and Navy stores, Bow Lane:

Motor cars and accessories were captured during this raid. I was placed in charge of outpost at corner of Mercers St. and York St. to keep in touch with Capt. P. Daly, later Major General Free State Army, who was in charge of another outpost at Mercers Hospital. This job was successful.

Raid on King's Inns:

This was a raid for arms. The entire amount was captured. I was told off by Capt. Clancy with other men to act as outposts at Bolton St. and Henrietta St. corner, and if any military arrived we were to open fire on them and throw the grenades which we carried. This job was very successful.

Attempted rescue of R.C. Barton:

I was ordered to report to 46 Parnell Square at 10 o'clock in the morning, from where I was ordered with Mick Kelly of A. Company Battalion 1 to go to Hardwicke Lane and collect a handcart and bring it to Nelson St. where a ladder was to be tied on to it. I was then ordered to take my place at the corner of Nelson St. and Berkeley St., and when the lorry arrived and the signal was given the handcart would be placed across the road and I was to jump on the running board and hold up the driver. The driver had said we had the wrong lorry as all they were military prisoners. One of our men was accidentally wounded in the leg. After a time we were ordered home. The job was a failure.

Bombing of troop and ammunition train at Newcomen Bridge:

I received a mobilisation order from Capt. Clancy to

meet him at his shop at 6.30 where he told me to go to Oriel Hall, Oriel St., where we would get further instructions. The late Brigade O/C, Dick McKee, picked out men for bombing squads. I was picked as one, after which we left for our destination, and after several trains had been held up and no sign of the one we were after the man in charge of our squad, whose name I was told was Brennan, told us we could get ready to go home. Just then a train steamed in and was stopped and happened to be the right one, but the two lorries we had on the bridge to take the stuff away had been sent off a few minutes previously. After three grenades had been thrown at the train we were ordered home.

Raid for arms on house 15 North Circular Road, from which a number of assorted rifles and swords etc. were taken. I was acting as outpost with other members of Company.

Assisting rescue of Dan Breen from Mater Hospital:

Following on an attempt to capture an armoured car at Phibsborough in which one man was killed and another wounded, I saw the Tans raiding the hospital and went to Comdt. Clancy's shop and reported it to him. He instructed me to keep in touch with him in his shop and the hospital every 15 minutes. I placed the late B. Ryan (who was later executed) at the hospital to report to me how things were going on. At about 3.30 Comdt. McKee told me if I met any Volunteers, men whom I could trust, I was to tell them to get their guns and report to me at the Mater Hospital, which they did. About this time I noticed an individual hanging around outside the Republican Outfitters and reported

him to Comdts. McKee and Clancy, who asked me to describe him which I did. At this time I was told not to stay any longer than 10 minutes away. When I turned into North Earl St. I saw a lorry of soldiers and an armoured car in front of me and tried to get to the shop in front of them but failed. Just as the soldiers were getting out of the lorry Dick McKee walked out of the shop, while Seán Treacy ran from it and was pounced on by the individual whom I had reported to Comdts. McKee and Clancy, and whom I later heard was named Christian, and another man named Price or White. Seán Treacy pulled his gun and shot Christian in the stomach. Just then the armoured car opened fire and the soldiers in the lorry

I was in the line of fire unarmed and took cover.

When the firing had ceased I came out and saw three men lying on the footpath - Christian, Price, and huddled up in the corner was Seán Treacy. I went over to him and blood was trickling down his face. I searched his pockets. His gun was gone but anything I found in his pockets I transferred to my own, ammunition, pens, dispatches and a field message book, for which I was thanked by Comdts. McKee and Clancy. I then went to the Mater Hospital and after stopping there for some time I was told to send the men away. Later that night they smashed up the Republican Outfitters.

Appointed Company Police Officer:

I had the supplying of men to police cinemas and patrolling of Company area. I took part in the tracing and capture of robbers known as the Sons of Dawn.

First sitting Dáil Éireann:

I was told by my Company O/C to be at the Mansion

House at 9.45 to act as one of the guard of honour for the American visitors who were the guests of honour. After the sitting was over we were ordered to the National University, Earlsfort Terrace, and again acted as guard of honour. When the ceremony was over there we were told to go home and clean up and report back to the Mansion House where a banquet was to be held in honour of the American visitors. When I arrived back the Mansion House was in the hands of the military. We were ordered to hang round until they left and get to the door as soon as possible after, which we did, where we had to form a cordon in front to allow the guests through. After that we were brought inside.

Following on this Det. Officer McNamara intimated that the job he was at was taking photographs at 6 Harcourt St. and at the boats and stations of people who were Republican, and it was arranged to disarm him of the camera which he carried. First he was to be at Dunlaoghaire where he didn't turn up. The next time I was ordered to take part in this was at Stephen's Green where again he didn't turn up. I don't think that this camera was ever got even though he became friendly after.

During these activities I was doing special work for Comdts. McKee and Clancy collecting and shifting ammunition etc. One job was to collect parcels at Tom Traynor's (who was later executed) shop and bring them to the Kingsbridge or Boradstone and place them in a carriage with a young lady who had been pointed out to me

beforehand. This I did on several occasions. I had to report every evening at 6 o'clock and Saturday at 3 o'clock to Peadar Clancy to see if he had anything to be done.

I was ordered by P. Clancy to search room at 71 Eccles St., where a man named Quinlisk was living and who was later shot in Cork as a secret service agent. We found 2 egg grenades and some assorted ammunition.

I was on duty with Section at Croke Park on Bloody Sunday selling tickets for match which was being run for funds for the Dublin Brigade.

I was arrested on 8th December 1920 and lodged in the Royal Barracks, from where I was transferred to Ballykinlar and interned there until 16th December 1921. After my release I reported back my Company and took up rank as 2nd Lieutenant. I remained with the Company until asked to go into the National Army by my Company O/C - Capt. Oman - who gave me to understand that I was going in for a purpose. From Beggars Bush I was picked as one of a special guard on members of Free State Government at the City Hall, with the rank of Q.M. During the time I was there I still attended my Company parades. I remained there until called out by the Brigade O/C, Oscar Traynor, and was then told to report to 6 Gardiner's Row, from where as one of the guard on G.H.Q. I.R.A. we went to ~~44~~ Parnell Square and then to the Four Courts where a Guards Company was formed. I was given charge of a section.

I took part in a raid on Curragh Camp where many rifles, revolvers and cars were taken away. I was ordered by Capt. McDonald from Major General O'Connor, to go with Bob DeCourcy to Limerick, who would give me as much detonators as he could get and I would bring them back as soon as possible. He collected 3,000 detonators which I delivered back to the Four Courts safely.

I participated in the defence of the Four Courts on 28th June 1922. I was wounded in the head and was some time in Mater Hospital and later under Drs. Barry and Fluery. I then had to go into the Eye and Ear Hospital and have my left eye removed, from where I again went in charge of Dr. Barry. By the time I was let go round again my whole Company was smashed up. Practically all had been arrested and I was at a loose end. I met C. Price in Dr. Barry's and he was to fix me up with his crowd. While going to meet him one day I was just held up by Det. Officer Baxter, but I got there first and disarmed him.

