

W. S. 1,030 ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
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No. W.S. 1030

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

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1,030

Witness

John Joseph Hogan (Sean S. O hOgain),
Longueville,
Ballynoe, Tallow,
Co. Waterford.

Identity.

Member of Irish Volunteers, Ballynoe,
Co. Cork, 1914 - ;

Adjutant Ballynoe Coy. Fermoy Batt'n. 1921.

Subject.

National activities, Ballynoe, Co. Cork,
1910-1923.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. S. 2319.

STATEMENT BY MR. JOHN JOSEPH HOGAN,
Longueville, Ballynoe, Tallow, Co. Waterford.

I was born in Fermoy on November 17th, 1899. My father was a road steward for Cork County Council.

I was educated at Ballynoe National Schools and, while a student there, I joined the Gaelic League which was organised in the parish by Peadar O'Hannrahan and Seán O'Carroll in 1910. The pioneer members of the League in the district were Seán Ó Cuiv, James Ryle, N.T., Tom Griffin, Micheál Ó h-Uiginn, Seán Hennessy, Maurice Casey and Dick Walsh. The membership of the Branch would be about twenty. The activities of the Branch were mainly concerned with the teaching of Irish, the organisation of aeriochts, concerts and other Irish-Ireland activities. Irish classes were held at least once a week. The teachers were Seán Mac Maw and Thomas Fitzgerald. The branch fell through early in 1915 when the teacher at the time - Tom Fitzgerald - joined the British Army.

The Irish Volunteers were first organised in this area in January, 1916. The unit was organised by Terry MacSwiney and Tom Kent. They addressed a public meeting in connection with the foundation of the unit at Ballynoe village. They were later arrested and charged with preaching sedition. Although I was closely associated with them, I did not join up at this time as I was considered too young. The pioneer members, as far as I can recollect, were Sean Hennessy, Martin O'Keefe, James Fitzgerald, Dave Higgins, Tim Hurley, Richard O'Keefe, Peter O'Callaghan, Jim O'Callaghan and Dave Sullivan. I

think that the officers of the unit were:-

Captain - Martin O'Keeffe.
Lieutenant - Sean Hennessy.

When the Volunteers were reorganised in the district in September, 1917, I joined the unit. The strength, at the time, was about thirty-six. The officers were:-

Captain - Martin O'Keeffe
1st Lieutenant- Seán Hennessy
2nd Lieutenant- Tom Griffin.

The reorganisation of the Volunteers in the area followed a meeting to organise Sinn Féin which was held by David Kent in the late Summer of 1917. The re-organisation was carried out by the local members of the pre 1916 unit. There was no visiting organiser. The members of the Company helped to organise Volunteer units in Lisgoold, Dunganey^{or} and Tallow before the end of 1917.

The Company, to the number of about thirty, attended a Manchester Martyrs' Commemoration parade in Fermoy in November 1917. It later attended in strength a parade of the Fermoy Battalion to which it was attached. This parade was held in Castlelyons early in 1918. As far as I can recollect, the Battalion O/C at the time was Liam Denn. The Ballynoe Company also attended a big parade in connection with the organisation of Sinn Féin which was held in Fermoy in December 1917. The companies in the Fermoy Battalion at this time were: Fermoy, Ballynoe, Watergrasshill, Araglin, Glenville, Rathcormac and Kilworth.

During the conscription scare in the Spring and

Summer of 1918 there was a big influx of new recruits. The strength of the Company now reached sixty. As all the arms in the area were surrendered voluntarily, there were no raids for arms in the district. As a matter of fact, nearly all the shotguns in the area were held by Volunteers or members of their families.

Following the arrest of a large number of the leaders at the time of the alleged German Plot in May 1918, all the Company officers went on the run. During this period a bomb factory for the battalion was started at Dave Higgins, Ball^{yl}egane. Incidentally, this was the only house in the parish of Ballynoe which was never raided by the British forces during the period to the Truce. The principal workers in this factory were Tom Griffin, Martin O'Keeffe, Paddy Bulman and Seán Hennessy. Beyond the fact that I supplied them with scrap metal, I do not know any more about the working of the factory. This factory was later transferred to Paddy Mulcahy's, Ballycullane, where it was operated by the same staff. I remember that on one occasion in the late Summer of 1918 I took a trunk load of bombs on a donkey and cart from this factory to Maher's Bridge, near Ballyduff, where I handed them over to the Battalion O/C (Mick Fitzgerald) and Dan Donovan, Araglin. This, as far as I know, finished the activities of this bomb factory.

During 1918 the usual parades, foot drill and target practices, with a Morris tube fitted rifle, were carried out, as well as scouting and outpost duty training at night. At this time I was engaged in keeping in touch with the officers on the run and in carrying despatches to Battalion headquarters. I also

maintained contact with Middleton Company, Cobh Battalion. I was also responsible for notifying all members of parades and any other activities which required that the Company be mobilised.

There was no activity in the Company area during the general election in December 1918, as Tom Hunter was returned unopposed for the constituency. Our Company was, however, engaged in election duties at the polling booths in Tallow in the area of Lismore Battalion, Waterford Brigade.

The usual activities continued throughout the Spring and Summer of 1919. At this time Tom Griffin, who was 1st Lieutenant of the Company, was appointed Battalion Quartermaster and was replaced by Tim Donovan who was elected to the position. Phil Lane was elected 2nd Lieutenant. The officers now were:-

O/C	- Sean Hennessy
1st Lieutenant	- Tim Donovan
2nd Lieutenant	- Phil Lane.

On Saturday night, August 30th, 1919, I was instructed by Tom Griffin to parade at Ballylegane Bridge at about 10 p.m. The others on parade were: Martin O'Keefe, Pad Leahy, Peter O'Callaghan and Tom Griffin, who was in charge. The latter asked each man present whether he would be prepared to parade at short notice and carry out any instructions issued. Each man replied in the affirmative and the parade was then dismissed. With the other members of this parade, I attended an aeriocht in ^{at} Dungow^{ey} on the next day and, on our way home from this event, Martin O'Keefe suggested that Willie O'Mahoney (Clonmult Company), who resided on the

borders of Ballynoe area, should be included in the parade for the proposed job. Tom Griffin agreed.

On the night of September 6th, 1919, Tom Griffin issued instructions to the party, who paraded at Ballylegane Bridge on the previous Saturday night, and also to Willie O'Mahoney to parade at Lane's Wood at 8 a.m. on September 7th, 1919. Lane's Wood is about midway on the road between Ballynoe and Conna. With Pad Leahy I prepared some batons from wheel-spokes that night and took them to the parade ground the next morning. At Lane's Wood we were picked up by Jack Mulvey, Rathcormac, who was driving a Ford touring car (registered no., HI.200). Before moving off we blotted out the particulars on the number plates with "Max" boot polish. The party in the car were Tom Griffin, Pad Leahy, Peter O'Callaghan, John Joe Hogan (witness) and the driver (Jack Mulvey). Martin O'Keefe and Willie O'Mahoney cycled to Carrigabrick Cross while we travelled via Carrigeen to the Fermoy-Tallow main road and on to Carrigabrick which is about one mile from Fermoy. Here we met some members of the Fermoy and Araglin Companies as well as some members of the Brigade and Battalion staffs, also the men from Mallow Battalion with their car. Liam Lynch was in charge. Others present were George Power, Mick Fitzgerald, Lar Condon, John Fanning, Paddy Ahearne, Jack Fitzgerald, George Lennon and Mick Mansfield (both of Waterford Brigade) and a number of men from Araglin and Fermoy Companies with whom I was not acquainted.

Liam Lynch then explained to the assembled Volunteers that it was proposed to attack and disarm a party of the King's Shropshire Light Infantry who usually

paraded to the Wesleyan Church in Walkers Row each Sunday. He then delegated to the O/C of each of the different units the responsibility of issuing the instructions, as already agreed upon, to each unit. Tom Griffin instructed our party to proceed to Fermoy on foot as individuals and to ensure that, when the church party of military arrived near the Wesleyan Church, we were in a position to pounce on them immediately the signal was given to open the attack.

With Peter O'Callaghan I walked into the Square, Fermoy, where we strolled about until we saw the enemy party approaching. The others did likewise and were hanging around in small groups. We all strolled along beside the parade until it reached the Wesleyan Church when the corporal in charge gave the order, "March to attention". This meant that the parade brought their rifles from the "slope" to the "trail". Immediately there was a shout of "Hands up" from the main attacking party, which included Mick Fitzgerald, Lar Condon, Paddy Ahern, John Fanning, George Power and Jack Fitzgerald, who had been standing on the courthouse steps just in front of the parade. All my party, together with the other "strollers" then closed in on the military party and, in a few minutes, they were all disarmed.

As I closed in, I pulled out by home-made baton and, finding one of the Volunteers struggling with a soldier for the possession of his rifle, I promptly struck the latter on the head and he collapsed - releasing the rifle. I then picked a rifle from another soldier and used it to assist two other members of the attacking party to take a rifle from a soldier who was still struggling to hold on to it. At this stage, the cars

which had turned round and faced in the direction of Tallow were moving slowly by the site of the attack, and all the captured rifles were thrown into the cars. With Tom Griffin and Peter O'Callaghan of the Ballynoe party, I jumped on to the side of the Mallow car and we proceeded to Carrigabrick where we picked up William Ahearne (chemist and first-aid man). Our car was followed by the Rathcormac car driven by Jack Mulvey.

When the cars had passed Carrigabrick, the road was blocked by felling two large trees. We then proceeded to Kilmagner - about four miles further on - where the rifles were removed from the cars and dumped. With Tom Griffin and Peter O'Callaghan, I then left the Mallow car and entered Jack Mulvey's car which, at the time, was occupied by Pad Leahy. We then proceeded towards Tallow Bridge, halting on the way to check up on the contents of the car and to clean up the number-plates. We then found that we could not remove the "Max" polish from the rear number-plate without removing the white painted number underneath, so we had then to concentrate on removing the polish between the digits and letters in the number so that it showed up in black instead of in white as it was originally. We proceeded to Cappoquin where we went to Mass and then on to Mount Melleray where we remained until late in the evening.

We left Mount Melleray for home about 6 p.m. All went well until we reached Lismore where we were halted by a party of military in an armoured car. The officer in charge questioned Tom Griffin, who was seated in front with the driver, as to where we had been and was, of course, informed that we had spent the day in Mount Melleray. At the time, the officer was approached by an R.I.C. man,

named O'Connell, who was at one time stationed in Ballynoe. He (the R.I.C. man) stated that he knew Tom Griffin and that he was unlikely to be involved in any trouble. We were then allowed to proceed.

Before we reached Tallow bridge, we stopped to help a motorist who was having trouble with the engine of his car. While there, we were overtaken by the party in the armoured car which halted. The officer in charge was, on this occasion, accompanied by Constable Norris, R.I.C., who was station detective in Fermoy. We were all questioned individually and asked to account for our movements. The car was closely examined and the driver (Jack Mulvey) questioned as to the difference between the front and rear numbers - one was in black letters and figures (HI.200), the other in white. Eventually we were allowed to proceed, after our names and addresses had been taken. We arrived home in Ballynoe about 8 p.m.

Later, on the night of September 7th, I met Peter O'Callaghan and, after consultation, we decided not to sleep at home that night. On the next evening a large force of military and police arrived in the district. They arrested Tom Griffin and Pat Leahy - Jack Mulvey, the driver of the car, had already been arrested on the morning of Monday, September 8th, 1919. The raiding party also searched for Peter O'Callaghan and me, but we were not at home. This position continued for less than a week, when we got instructions from Battalion headquarters, through Martin O'Keefe, to return to our homes. We did as instructed and we were both arrested at our respective homes on September 16th, 1919.

We were both taken to the R.I.C. barracks, Fermoy, where we were placed on an identification parade with five

or six ex British soldiers wearing "Legion" badges (badges issued to members of British ex soldiers' organisations). About six soldiers inspected the parade but all failed to identify anyone. We were, however, remanded that day and removed to Cork Gaol where we joined Tom Griffin, Pad Leahy, Jack Mulvey, Mick Fitzgerald, Lar Condon, John Fanning, Jim Fanning and Jack Swaine, who had already been remanded. After about a month, we were joined by Leo O'Callaghan (the driver of the Mallow car). Martin and Richard O'Keefe, Ballynoe, were also arrested about the same time.

As a result of the fresh arrests, an identification parade was held in Cork Gaol on which all the arrested men were paraded in the prison exercise yard with a number of other prisoners. At this parade I was identified by Private Preece, although he had failed to identify me at the previous parade which took place nine days after the raid. Mick Fitzgerald was also identified by another soldier on this occasion. About a week later John and James Fanning, Lar Condon, Jack Swaine, Richard and Martin O'Keefe were released. The remaining prisoners (Tom Griffin, Pad Leahy, Mick Fitzgerald, Peter O'Callaghan, Jack Mulvey, Leo O'Callaghan and witness, John Joe Hogan) were remanded at weekly intervals until, I think, the last week in December, 1919, when we were taken to Fermoy and some depositions were taken.

On January 1st, 1920, I was isolated from the other prisoners. I immediately went on hunger-strike. The other prisoners followed suit. Owing to the intervention of the Lord Mayor of Cork, at the time, the strike was called off after six days. Although I was kept in a separate wing of the prison and exercised in

the reception yard, I was allowed to associate with the other prisoners.

The taking of the depositions continued at intervals and was completed about April, 1920. We were then returned for trial to Cork summer assizes. In the intervening period the Crown made an application in the High Court to have the venue of the trial changed from the County of the City of Cork to the County of the City of Londonderry. This application was granted at the time, but subsequently Counsel for the Defence made an application in the courts to have this order set aside. The latter application was successful. The order was set aside and the trial was re-fixed for Cork.

The trial was held at Cork County Assizes in July, 1920, before Judge Moore. When putting the case to the Grand Jury, the judge instructed them that they should not find a true bill against any of the accused who had not been definitely identified as having taken part in the attack. In this connection, he pointed out that, although the cars in which they had been travelling had been identified, there was no justification for assuming that the occupants of the cars at any time later on the date of the attack on the military party had any connection with the incident. Following this address to the Grand Jury, Jack Mulvey, Tom Griffin, Pad Leahy, Peter O'Callaghan and Leo O'Callaghan were discharged. Mick Fitzgerald and witness (John Joe Hogan) were arraigned. Dan Hegarty (Mallow), who had been arrested some time about Christmas, 1919, was also arraigned, but he was found unfit to plead on the advice of the Crown.

When the preliminaries had been gone through, it was discovered that there was no jury available to try

our case. At this time the Irish Republican Army had issued an order prohibiting persons liable to serve on juries from acting thereon. Mick Fitzgerald and I were then put back to the winter assizes and returned to Cork Gaol.

Early in August, 1920, together with other political prisoners in Cork Gaol, I went on hunger-strike. The sentenced prisoners amongst us were removed and deported to various prisons in England within about eight days while, three days later, I was removed with seventeen other untried prisoners to Winchester Prison. Amongst those included in this group were Maurice Crowe (Tipperary), Con Neenan (Cork), Dan Sullivan, - Quinlan (Cork), - Morrissey and - Delaney (Killenaule), - Glasgow, - Kelly, and - McNamara (Limerick); Jim Dowd (Kerry), Mick Crowley, Tom Crawford, Jack McCarthy (Ballylanders). We were later joined by three others, including Mick Sheehan (Tipperary) and - O'Rourke (Limerick). Maurice Crowe, who was in charge, ordered the hunger-strike to cease after he had consulted the general body of the prisoners.

Towards the end of September, 1920, seventeen of the prisoners were returned to Cork for trial by courtmartial, while I was left behind with Jim Dowd, Thady Kelly and O'Rourke. Later, in November, 1920, the latter pair were removed from Winchester to Dublin, and at Christmas Dowd was taken away. I was then on my own in Winchester until the end of February, 1921, when I was removed to Wormwood Scrubbs, where I was held for a few days before being taken back to Dublin (Mountjoy Prison) where I was placed in C. Wing. Amongst the prisoners in this wing at the time were Arthur Griffith, Eoin McNeill, Eamonn Duggan, Mick Staines, John

Markey (a Dublin Volunteer). During my stay in Mountjoy, Seán McKeon and Tom Traynor were prisoners on the ground floor of C. Wing.

I was removed to Arbour Hill some time about the end of April and, two days later, was transferred with about forty other prisoners to Rath Camp, The Curragh, Co. Kildare. I was detained here until the general release of prisoners following the signing of the Treaty in December, 1921.

My rank at the Truce was Volunteer.

The strength of the Ballynoe Company was forty.

Following my release, I rejoined Ballynoe Company and was appointed Company Adjutant. I took part in all Company activities up to February, 1922, when I was posted as a member of the maintenance party at Moorepark Camp, which was taken over from the British on February 11th, 1922. I remained there until the New Barracks, Fermoy, were evacuated by the British, when I was transferred to this post. I continued to serve in Fermoy until August, 1922, when the barracks were evacuated by the I.R.A. I then joined the Battalion Column of Fermoy Battalion and took part in numerous engagements against Free State forces in the area until I was arrested in November, 1922. I was detained in Hare Park Camp until November 27th, 1923, when I was released after a hunger-strike.

Rank at July 1st, 1922 - Company Adjutant, Ballynoe.

Strength of Company - About sixty.

SIGNED: Seán S O hOgain

DATE: 18th October 1954

Sean S. O hOgain,

18th October 1954.

WITNESS: Phil O'Donnell

(Phil O'Donnell)