

W. S. 1,174
ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
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No. W.S. 1,174

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1,174

Witness

Patrick Kenny,
Ballydarragh,
Craanford,
Gorey,
Co. Wexford.

Identity.

Captain 'E' Company 4th Battalion, North
Wexford Brigade, 1918 - .

Subject.

Irish Volunteers, Gorey district, Co. Wexford,
1914-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No.S.2492.....

Form B.S.M. 2

STATEMENT BY MR. PATRICK KENNYBallydarragh^H, Craanford, Gorey, Co. Wexford.

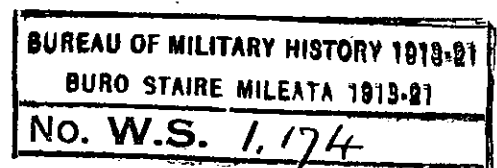
My first connection with the Volunteer movement was early in 1914, when I joined a group of the Irish National Volunteers.

We attended a few big parades in Gorey and Ballycanew. I remember one meeting which was held soon after the outbreak of the first World War. There was a lot of speech-making and appeals made to us to join the British army. Shortly after this, I attended a very big parade in Gorey and again we had a lot of speech making. When appeals were made to us to join the British army I left the parade with about 25 others. Needless to say, we were not very popular at that time for having done so. That ended my connection with the Volunteer movement until the threat of conscription came in 1917.

Meetings of protest against conscription were held in Craanford as well as in many other places. We had a couple of meetings which were attended by large crowds. All went well until a Mr. Cotter attended a meeting and proposed forming a company of the Irish Volunteers. When he asked all to take the oath of allegiance to the Irish Volunteers, there was a run to the other field, only eight - including myself - remained. We then formed the Craanford Company and were attached to the 3rd Battalion, North Wexford Brigade. I was elected company captain. We carried on in a small way at first and I continued to organise and enlist new members until eventually I had 25 men in the company.

We also organised a Sinn Fein Club in the parish. We took a very active part in the 1918 General Election campaign on behalf of the Sinn Fein candidate.

My first job in the Volunteers was to arm the company as we had not got one gun; so I decided to raid the big farmers



in the area and seize their guns. The first raid we carried out was on a big Unionist farmer. Everything went well; we got his gun and some cartridges. Our next raid was on a big Nationalist farmer. He put up a fight; in fact, he actually fired three times at us and refused to give up his gun. We then let out his cattle and lay in wait until he came along. We waylaid him and got his gun. We got four guns that night. Next day there was great R.I.C. activity in the district.

I continued to drill the company and train them in the use of arms. Early in 1920 the company was about 20 strong and parades were held twice a week. About October 1920, following a reorganisation of the battalion areas, my company was transferred to the 4th Battalion which was under the command of the late Thomas Brennan; the Vice O/C. was James Kavanagh, Tinahely. John McGrath, Askamore, was battalion quartermaster, and Patrick Brennan was adjutant. The captains of the different companies were:

A/Company, Carnew	Denis O'Sullivan
B/Company, Askamore & Brideswell	Michael Deegan
C/Company, Crossbridge & Tinahely	Joseph Kavanagh
D/Company, Coolboy	James Mulhall
E/Company, Craanford	Patrick Kenny (myself)

From this on, meetings of the battalion council were held every week. They were presided over^{by} the battalion O/C. and were attended by all members of the battalion staff, as well as the captains of the various companies. From then on we got going strong. My place was a home for Volunteers who were on the run.

Sometime in January 1921, we raided the mails and got some good information which we passed on to the battalion O/C.

Some time in March the same year I got word that the North Wexford Brigade Flying Column was moving into my area

to carry out an attack on an R.I.C. patrol. I arranged for the billeting and feeding of the column. I went to Byrne's of Raheen where the column was and guided them to MacDonald's of Kilmichael where I had arranged for the column to stay for the night. I placed members of my company on guard duty during the night so that the column would not be surprised by enemy forces.

I arranged to meet the column the following night on the Hollyford road and to guide them into Gorey to attack a patrol of R.I.C. which was in the habit of leaving Gorey R.I.C. barracks at about 10.30 each night.

When I went to the appointed meeting place I knew that something serious had happened as there was a large number of R.I.C. around the place. I learned afterwards that three members of the column went into Hollyford and got drunk and said they were Black and Tans. Apparently this information was sent to the R.I.C. in Gorey and a large force of R.I.C. and Black and Tans came out and approached MacDonald's where the column was staying. The column was lucky to get away. When I arrived home that night, some men of the column were already there, so I had to guide them to Brideswell, as my place was so near to the scene of activity it was not considered safe. I had also to yoke the pony and bring another man to Byrne's of Raheen. He was not able to walk as he had sprained his ankle.

When the column was making its escape from Kilmichael some of them hid their rifles. I searched the area and collected five rifles and 300 rounds of ammunition and brought them to headquarters. My home was raided by the R.I.C. the next day and I had to sleep away from home until the Truce.

In April 1921, with other officers of the Brigade I attended a training camp in the White Mountains and underwent a week's intensive training. We had a busy time there. When

I came back I held company parades three times a week and I imparted to the men the knowledge I had gained during my week's training.

Early in May 1921, I got word that the column was again coming into my area. I met the column, as arranged, and escorted it to Doyle's of Buckstown. On Friday night with some members of my company I again escorted the column to the Gorey side of Inch where they had planned to attack a patrol of R.I.C. which usually travelled along the Inch-Gorey road every Saturday. This attack did take place on Saturday morning. One Black and Tan was killed and an R.I.C. sergeant was seriously wounded.

The column came to my place after the attack. I fed them and moved them to Raheen.

I collected a levy from all the farmers in my company area and, needless to say, we were not popular for doing so.

I trenched and blocked the roads in my area, but I made the people in my area who were hostile towards us do the work.

There was a lady near Gorey who was keeping company with a Black and Tan. She was warned to give up going with him, but she did not do so. One night with two men of my company I went to her house and cut off her hair. She did not go with him after that.

Some time late in May I guided three members of the column to the Gorey Road to attack two Black and Tans who were keeping company with two girls. They usually went out the Gorey road at night. I acted as scout for our party, but the Tans did not come out that night. Some of my company went out on the same job the following night, but the Tans went a different road.

I continued on until the Truce came in July 1921.

Signed:

Patrick Kenny

(Patrick Kenny)

Date:

28 May 1955

Witness:

Seán Brennan Lt. Colonel