

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 1239

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1,239

Witness

Daniel McCarthy,
Creggane,
Lombardstown,
Co. Cork.

Identity.

First Lieutenant Lombardstown Coy.
Irish Volunteers, Mallow Batt'n.,
Cork II Brigade.

Subject.

Lombardstown Company Irish Volunteers,
Co. Cork, 1917-1923.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

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STATEMENT BY DANIEL MCCARTHY,
Creggane, Lombardstown, Co. Cork.

I was born at Creggane, Lombardstown, on June 17th, 1894. My parents were farmers. My father was a prominent member of the Land League in the area and a follower of Parnell. He later supported Wm. O'Brien in opposition to the Irish Parliamentary Party under John Redmond. During my boyhood days I listened to the fireside chats at home, mainly on subjects of Irish history arising out of the political set-up of the time. There were often stories of the Fenian Rising and of Robert Emmet and these, at the time, intrigued me.

My first contact with a national organisation was when I joined the Gaelic League in Glantane and Gortmore early in 1917. The prime movers and teachers in the branch were Liam Foley and Paddy Foley. Other pioneer members were: Liam Bell, Phil Singleton, Mick Ring and all those who were pioneer members of the Irish Volunteers. We had a membership of about 25. Classes were held once each week in Glantane school, where Ned Walsh (the poet) taught at one time.

When the Irish Volunteers were formed in Lombardstown in the autumn of 1917 I joined up. Other members at the time were: Mick McCarthy, Ned Murphy, Phil Singleton, Con Buckley, Jack Connell, Dan Callaghan, Mick McCarthy, Mick Sullivan, Denis O'Shea, Paddy Corkerry, Dave Cronin, Pat Healy, Denis Callaghan, Mick Finnegan and Denis Cremin. The strength of the unit in the early stages was about 15.

It increased later to the neighbourhood of 50. The first officers of the company were:

O/C - Ned Murphy
 1st Lt. - Phil Singleton
 2nd Lt. - Dan McCarthy (witness).

The company was, I think, an independent unit of Cork Brigade at this time.

During the period to early 1918 the strength of the unit was gradually increasing. The members were training in close order foot drill and in arms drill, mainly with wooden guns. When conscription was threatened in the spring of 1918 there was a big increase in membership. We then had close on 80 members. At this time all shotguns in the area were collected by the Volunteers and the total armament of the company about this time was approximately 40 shotguns with 500/600 rounds of ammunition for same. During conscription period all this ammunition was loaded with buckshot. When the conscription scare had passed the membership fell to 52, at which figure it remained more or less constant until the Truce. There was no change in officers at this time.

During 1917 all Volunteers were busy organising Sinn Féin, which party was mainly composed of Volunteers and the members of their families.

Early in 1918, I think, the Volunteer organisation in the area was grouped on a battalion basis. Lombardstown Company became a unit of Mallow Battalion. Other companies in the battalion were: Mourne Abbey, Mallow, Ahadillane, Analeentha, Ballyclough, Dromahane, Two-pot-house. The first battalion officers were:

O/C - Liam Jones, Mourne Abbey.
 Vice O/C - Jerh. Buckley, " "
 Adj. - Paddy McCarthy, " "
 Q/M - Mick Nagle, " "

Training went on as usual throughout 1918.

Classes in signalling and scouting were held in addition to the ordinary foot drill, but there was no great change with regard to arms. Field exercises were held occasionally.

At the general election held in December, 1918, there was no contest in this area. The Sinn Féin candidate, Paudeen O'Keeffe, was returned unopposed. I was a delegate from the local Sinn Féin Club to the convention at which he was selected as candidate. The convention was held at Derrygallon.

Cork Brigade was at this time composed of about 20 battalions and it was decided to divide it into three ^{brigades} ~~battalions~~. Mallow Battalion became a unit of Cork 11 Brigade. The other battalions in the brigade were: Fermoy, Castletownroche, Charleville, Kanturk, Newmarket and Millstreet. This brigade was established on January 6th, 1919. The first officers were:

O/C - Liam Lynch, Fermoy.
 Vice O/C - Dan Hegarty, Mallow.
 Adj. - Tom Barry, Glanworth.
 Q/M - George Power, Fermoy.

After a short time Tom Barry and George Power interchanged positions, but I think that before the end of 1919 Tom Barry relinquished the job of Q/M and returned to his battalion (Castletownroche) where he was O/C. Jerry Buckley (Mallow Battalion Vice O/C) then became Brigade Q/M.

During the summer and autumn of 1919 I was engaged with a number of other members of the company in organising

and collecting the first Dáil Éireann Loan.

About this time training was becoming more advanced and more interesting. I think that about this time we had a couple of .22 rifles in the company. We were thus enabled to have some target practice, usually on Sunday evenings.

The raid ^{ON} ^a of the party of British military at the Wesleyan Church in Fermoy created much interest in the area. There was no activity in Lombardstown area in connection with this engagement but the fact that it had been carried out by men of our brigade began to turn our minds towards military matters.

Beyond the usual training and exercises there was nothing to report until Easter, 1920, when several members of the company took part in the destruction of Glantane evacuated R.I.C. post. They were assisted by some members of Ahadillane Company, whose names I cannot remember. Amongst the Lombardstown men who took part were: Ned Murphy (O/C), Phil Singleton, Dan McCarthy (witness), Con Buckley, Jack Connell.

On May 13th, 1920, together with Denis Curtin (Dromahane) and my brother Mick, I arrested two men (O'Briens, Inchmay) who were wanted by the I.R.A. in connection with the robbery of a bank at Millstreet, Co. Cork. Scouts who had been operating in Mallow under Jerry Hanlon (Battalion Adjutant) reported that the men were on the train from Mallow and they were taken off at Lombardstown railway station. They were taken to Dromahane Company area, where they were handed over to O/C Dromahane ().

When General Lucas (O/C British Forces at Fermoy) was taken prisoner by Brigade Officers at Kilbarry near Fermoy on June 27th, 1920, he was taken by his escort (Liam Lynch, Jerh. Buckley and Jerh. Hanlon) to Pat Connell's, Lackendarra, where he was detained for one night. He was then removed to my home at Creggane, where he was kept for another night before being taken to West Limerick on June 29th, 1920, by Seán Moylan and Paddy Clancy with some officers from West Limerick Brigade.

When General Lucas and his escort arrived at Pat Connell's I was on duty there guarding a prisoner - Slattery, Stationmaster, Mallow - who had been removed "to an unknown destination" (as it was then known) because of his attitude to railway employees engaged in a strike against carrying enemy armed forces. I was accompanied by Phil Singleton, Jack Connell and Con Buckley. When General Lucas arrived we removed our prisoner to Con Buckley's. He was released on June 29th, 1920, on giving an undertaking to revise his previous attitude to the railway employees who were assisting the I.R.A. in the fight.

Normal activities continued until the Brigade Column was formed in mid September, 1920. The column was in training in neighbouring Mourne Abbey area.

About 4 a.m. on September 28th, 1920, I was mobilised with several other members of the company, including Phil Singleton, Mick McCarthy, Wm. Roche, Jerh. Roche, Mick O'Connell, Mick Finnegan, Denis Callaghan, Pat Healy, Tim Looney, Jack Ring and Ned Murphy, O/C. We were detailed to block the Mallow - Killarney road at Waterloo - about 4 miles from Mallow.

This we did by felling a large tree across the road about 9.20 a.m. While this job was in progress I was engaged in scouting and also in a position to indicate to the men engaged on felling the tree the time to do the job. I then returned home.

On the night of September 28th, 1920, Liam Lynch and George Power arrived at my home. Ernie O'Malley and Jerry Kiely went to Pat Lyons, Gurtavoher, and the remainder of the column, who took part in the Mallow barracks raid, were billeted in the company area. All members of the local company were engaged on guard and outpost duties during the night.

As the British forces wrecked several houses in Mallow on the night of the raid, Liam Lynch decided to put a guard on Lombardstown Creamery on the following night in anticipation of possible reprisal action. The guard was composed of some members of the company and some members of the column. Amongst those on duty were: Paddy O'Brien, Tom Coughlan, Mick Halloran, Dan Browne (Bde. Column), Phil Singleton, Dan Callaghan, Con Buckley, Jack Ring, Mick Ring, Jerh. Roche, Bill Roche, Jack Looney, Tim Looney, Paddy Clancy (Lombardstown Company). The guard were on duty from about 10 p.m. until daylight next day but the enemy did not put in an appearance.

The arms and stores captured at Mallow and which had been dumped in Ahadillane area on the 28th were taken to Lombardstown area on the night of September 29th, 1920. They were transported by my brother - Mick - accompanied by George Power (Bde. Adjutant). When the rifles were checked they were handed to the members of the Brigade Column - each man getting 100 rounds of ammunition.

The column remained in the area until about October 9th and during this period underwent an intensive course of training under Ernie O'Malley. Dick Willis and Jackie Bolster were put through a course of instruction in the use of the Hotchkiss machine-gun by Matt Flood of Fermoy Battalion. On or about October 9th the column were transported to Lisgriffin in Charleville Battalion area where Jim Brislane was O/C.

The column took part in an ambush of British troops at Ballydrochane near Kanturk on October 11th but I was not present.

On or about November 20th, 1920, I transported a supply of ammunition (.303) from the dump in our area to Mattie Kelliher's, South Horsemount, Kilcorney, for the use of the Brigade Column in an attack on the Black and Tan forces in Millstreet. This attack was carried out on November 22nd, 1920, and one member of the column - Paddy McCarthy (Meelin) - was killed in the engagement. I was accompanied on the trip to Kilcorney by Jack Connell.

The greater portion of the ammunition, as well as one of the Hotchkiss guns captured at Mallow, was dumped near my home. The dump was in Lackendarra area in the boundary fence of Pat Connell's farm. It was made in the form of a wooden box about 6'X3'X2 $\frac{1}{2}$ ' and was covered with felt. The second Hotchkiss gun was removed from the dump by Dick Willis when, with Leo O'Callaghan, he was on his way to join the Castletownroche Battalion Column about the second week in December, 1920.

Routine parades and drills went on about this time, with occasional bouts of guard duty when the Brigade

Column was in the area.

There was nothing out of the ordinary until the Mallow Battalion Column was formed early in January, 1921. I joined the column on its formation. Other members of the column were: Ned Waters, Denis Mulcahy, Jack Moloney (Congo), Batt Walsh, Phil Singleton, Con Breen, Con Buckley, Tom Hallinan, Wm. Roche, Jack Cunningham (O/C), Ned Murphy, Joe Morgan, Tadhg McCarthy. We underwent a course of training in a camp at Laharn. Instruction was given in scouting, musketry, use of cover and outpost duty. While in camp I fell sick and was sent home for medical attention. While at home I was arrested by a party of military and Black and Tans on January 17th, 1921. I was taken to Buttevant Military Barracks and then to Detention Barracks, Cork, where I was tried on a charge of being in possession of seditious documents (literature referring to Sinn Féin). I was found guilty and sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment, which I served in Cork Gaol and Spike Island. I was released on December 10th, 1921.

As far as I can recollect the following changes took place in the officers of the Mallow Battalion in the period January, 1920, to the Truce. Towards the end of 1919 Jerh. Buckley, Vice O/C, became Brigade Q/M and Liam Jones was replaced as O/C about the same time. The officers then were:

O/C - Paddy McCarthy
 Vice O/C - Owen Harold
 Adjt. - Tadhg Looney
 Q/M - Mick Nagle.

When Paddy McCarthy and Owen Harold were arrested in October, 1920, the new officers were:

O/C - Tadhg Byrne
 Vice: O/C - Tadhg Looney
 Adjt.- Jerry Hanlon
 Q/M - Mick Nagle.

Following Mourne Abbey in February, 1921, there was a further change as follows:

O/C - Tadhg Byrne
 Vice O/C - Ned Murphy
 Adjt.- Jerry Hanlon
 Q/M - Mick Nagle.

Sometime later Ned Murphy was appointed Brigade Q/M with a further change in personnel as follows:

O/C - Tadhg Byrne
 Vice: O/C - Jerry Hanlon
 Adjt.- Tadhg McCarthy
 Q/M - Con Regan.

My rank at the Truce - 1st Lieutenant, Lombardstown Company, Mallow Battalion, Cork 11 Brigade. The strength of the company was about 50.

Following my release from Spike Island I rejoined my local unit and continued normal training activities until the end of January, 1922, when on the taking over of Mallow Barracks from the British I joined the maintenance party there. During the spring of 1922 the local Trade Union leaders took over Mallow Flour Mills. In order to maintain order and to ensure a check was kept on the activities of those who had taken over the mills, the Battalion O/C placed a guard on the premises. As occasion demanded I was a member of this guard. I should have mentioned that the owner of the mills - Major Hallinan - was kidnapped at this time, and when he was later traced by the I.R.A. a guard was also posted at his private residence to prevent any further interference with him. When the mills were eventually handed over to the owner the guards were withdrawn, and a little later I left Mallow Barracks and returned home to attend to

my parents' farm. This would be, I think, April or May, 1922.

When the Civil War broke out at the end of June, 1922, I reported to Brigade H.Q. at Buttevant and took part in all engagements against Free State forces in Limerick and Kilmallock areas. After the withdrawal from this area I was instructed to report back to my home area, where I was appointed Company O/C and carried on normal activities until the cease fire in May, 1923.

Signed: Daniel McCarthy
(Daniel McCarthy)

Date: 31st Aug 55
31st Aug. 55.

Witness: P. O'Donnell (P. O'Donnell)
(Investigator)

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