

W. S. 1, 240

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 1240

ROINN



COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1,240.....

Witness

Daniel Flynn,
Meentaflugh,
Kiskeam,
Co. Cork.

Identity.

Adjutant, Kiskeam Company
Irish Volunteers, Co. Cork;
Member of Newmarket Battalion, Cork II Bgde.

Subject.

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

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

N11

File No. S. 2530.....

Form B.S.M. 2

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21 240
BURO STAIRE MILITARA 1913-21
NO. W.S. 1240

STATEMENT BY DAN FLYNN,

Meentaflugh, Kiskeam, Co. Cork.

I was born in my present home on January 28th, 1896. My parents were farmers, and when I had completed my education at Kiskeam National School at the age of 15 years I remained at home to assist my parents on the farm.

When the Irish Volunteers were formed in Kiskeam in March, 1917, I joined up. I was one of the original members of the unit. Others were: Nicholas Fitzgerald, Jim Riordan, Con T. Murphy, Mick Riordan, Jerry Scannell, Dan Guiney, John J. Murphy, Paddy Dennehy, Jim Cashman, Jerh. Eulcahy. The strength of the unit at first was about a dozen, but inside a month or so the membership increased to about 30. The first officers elected by the members were, I think:

O/C - Jerry Scannell.

1st Lt. - Jim Cashman.

2nd Lt. - Dan Guiney.

Adj. - Dan Flynn.

Q/M - Jim Riordan.

The members were usually drilled by the officers, who were, I think, trained by Seán O'Sullivan, an officer from Cork City who visited the area. The only drill performed in the early stages was ordinary foot drill. Parades were held in the fields in the district, usually at night.

The members of the unit were busily engaged in organising Sinn Féin during 1917 and early 1918. Beyond

this work and the normal drilling, there was nothing much doing until the British took steps to introduce conscription in the spring of 1918. This threat led to a large increase in the strength of the company, which now reached the neighbourhood of 150. Nearly every man of military age in the district joined the Volunteers. The vast majority of those who joined at this time continued to serve throughout the Tan war. The increase in membership did not lead to any change in officers at first. About this time all arms in the area not held by Volunteers were taken up. The only arms held, as far as I can remember, were shotguns. The pioneer members were busily engaged at this time organising the general public for the fight in the event of conscription being enforced. They did everything to ensure that every possible type of weapon was made available. Pikes were fashioned in the local forges; cartridges were collected and filled with buckshot.

Late in the spring of 1918 there was a change in the officers of the company as the O/C (Jerry Scannell) was dismissed by the Battalion O/C (Seán Moylan) for having organised and led a parade of the company towards Newmarket with the intention of attacking the R.I.C. post there. I think that this parade took place on a Sunday. The members of the company were armed with all kinds of weapons - shotguns, slashers, pikes, pick handles. I do not know how the idea of the parade arose or whether anyone other than the O/C had anything to do with organising it. Anyhow, we all marched towards Newmarket, but when we got to Coolagh Bridge - about 1 mile from Newmarket - we met Seán Moylan. He ordered the parade to be dismissed and the members to return home. Within

a few days Seán Moylan held an investigation into the whole affair. As a result, he dismissed the O/C (Jerry Scannell) and appointed Con T. Murphy to replace him.

There was a dispute between the members about this action and some members approached Seán Moylan (Battalion O/C) re the new appointment. Arising out of this interview, a fresh election was held to select a Company O/C and Jerry Scannell was again elected to take charge of the unit. He, however, left the district a short time later and Con T. Murphy again assumed command of the company.

During 1918 all arms in the area not already held by Volunteers or members of their families were collected. I'd say that about 30/40 shotguns were got in this way.

When the conscription period had passed the Volunteers were busy organising for the general election which was due to take place in December, 1918. However, we did not have too much work to do in this area as the Sinn Féin candidate - Paudeen O'Keefe - was returned unopposed.

Up to January, 1919, the whole of County Cork was under the control of the O/C Cork Brigade, Irish Volunteers. There were about 20 battalions in the brigade. Our battalion was the 19th (Newmarket). As the area was now considered too large, it was decided to divide it into 3 brigades to be numbered 1, 11 and 111. The Newmarket Battalion now became a unit of Cork 11 Brigade. The other battalions in the new brigade were: Fermoy, Mallow, Kanturk, Charleville,

Millstreet, Castletownroche. The officers of the new brigade were:

O/C - Liam Lynch, Fermoy.

Vice O/C - Dan Hegarty, Mallow.

Adjt.- Tom Barry, Glanworth.

Q/M - George Power, Fermoy.

All Volunteers were busy organising and collecting the Dáil Éireann Loan in the summer of 1919. Nearly every household in the district contributed to this loan. The remainder of the year passed without any event of importance in the area, although I think that Seán O'Sullivan, Cork City, spent a few days in the area, during which he put some of the company officers in the area through a course of training at Toureen. I did not take part in this course.

The first major activity in the company area took place at Easter, 1920, when a large number of members of the company were engaged in the destruction of Glashakinleen evacuated R.I.C. post. This operation was carried out in accordance with a general order issued by G.H.Q. Two members of the unit were accidentally burned on this job - Con T. Lurphy and Charlie Reilly. They recovered after treatment in hospital.

Towards the end of July, 1920, a number of members of the company travelled to Newmarket to take part in an attack on a curfew patrol which operated there. They travelled on at least two occasions, but the enemy patrol did not pass through the selected position on either occasion. Amongst those who took part were: Dan Flynn (witness), Jim Cashman, Mick Callaghan, John Murphy, Jeremiah Mulcahy and Jim Riordan.

Normal drilling and training continued until early in October, when with a number of other members of the Kiskeam Company and some men from Kingwilliamstown I took part in an ambush of a military convoy at Ballydrochane near Kanturk. On the evening of October 10th, 1920, I received a message from Jim Riordan to be in Kiskeam about 8 p.m. and to bring my shotgun. I reported as instructed and found Jim Cashman, Jim Riordan and Dan Guiney (Kiskeam) as well as Tom Herlihy, Manus Moynihan, John Jones and Dan Lucey (Kingwilliamstown) already assembled there. I then learned that we were due to report to Corney Lenihan's, Drouminarrigle at about 10 p.m. The other members of the party were travelling by horse and car but I decided to travel by cycle. On the way my bike broke down and I had to walk the greater portion of the way. As a result, I did not reach Drouminarrigle until nearly 4 a.m. Here I met Liam Lynch, Ernie O'Malley, Seán Moylan, Seán Nunan, together with the members of the Brigade Column and the men from Kiskeam and Kingwilliamstown who had travelled ahead of me. Shortly after my arrival the whole party moved off on foot to the position selected at Ballydrochane, about 1 mile from Kanturk on the Kanturk-Newmarket road. We reached the position about 8 a.m. The members of the Brigade Column were armed with rifles. The other members of the party had shotguns. One of the Hotchkiss guns captured in the raid on Mallow military barracks was also used in this ambush but I am not sure who handled the gun.

With the exception of the men who were to block the road by pushing two farm carts into the roadway, all other members of the party took up positions behind the

roadside fence north of the road. They were extended over a distance of about 200 yards on a straight stretch of road west of a bend at the Kanturk end of the position. I was in position beside Seán Moylan at the western end of the selected site. There was a disused farmhouse at our end of the position but on the opposite side of the road. It was from the entrance to this farmhouse that the carts were to be pushed to block the road when the approach of the enemy lorry was signalled. The road blocking job was left to Dan Guiney, Dan Lucey, Tom Herlihy and another. Liam Lynch was, I think, at this position. Ernie O'Malley was at the bend of the road to the east where the Hotchkiss gun was situated and from where the straight stretch of road could be enfiladed.

About 10 a.m. the enemy lorry drove round the bend at the eastern end of our position into the straight. The party at the farmhouse immediately pushed out two carts. At the same time fire was opened on the lorry by all sections. The driver was killed by the opening volley and the lorry collided with the barricade of carts and a milk car which was inside the western end of the ambush position just as the enemy lorry came into view. The military who were not wounded by the opening burst of fire jumped out and took cover beneath the lorry. They replied to our fire but were forced to evacuate their position by a burst of fire from the Hotchkiss gun at the bend. The enemy then surrendered and our party moved on to the road, where we collected the arms and ammunition of the enemy. We got 8 rifles, 2 revolvers and a few hundred rounds of ammunition. Enemy casualties were, I think, one killed and nearly

all the others wounded. The lorry was then set on fire and all members of the I.R.A. party withdrew to Drouminarrigle. The Kiskeam and Kingwilliamstown men were then ordered to return to their home areas and to arrange for other Volunteers to report to Drouminarrigle that night for any duty for which they might be required. With Jim Riordan, Jim Cashman and Dan Guiney I returned to Kiskeam, where we arranged for replacements to report for duty that night. The only members of the relief party whose names I can recollect are Jack O'Leary and John Joe Murphy.

There was very little activity in the area until after Christmas, 1920, but early in December a training camp was set up in the battalion area at Toureen. Seán Moylan was in charge and the Training Officer was Tom Roche. The camp continued for about 10 days, during which those attending got an exhaustive course in the care and use of arms, training in the principles of scouting, the use of cover and the selection of ambush positions. In addition we were put through a course of cross-country night marches, during which many hard words were used towards the officers who selected the route to be followed. As far as I can recollect, this camp was attended by Jim Cashman, Dan Brown, Jim Riordan, Denis Galvin, Con Morley, Dan Vaughan, Seán Óg Curtin, Con T. Murphy, Jerry Keane and myself.

Early in January, 1921, I joined the battalion column and on January 15th we attempted to ambush a party of military travelling in lorries on the Newmarket-Rockchapel road. However, before the convoy reached our position we had received word from Newmarket that the enemy were collecting hostages in the town to take along

on the journey, so when the convoy of three lorries came along we had to allow them to pass through.

I was with the Battalion Column under Seán Moylan when we took up positions on the Castleisland - Kingwilliamstown (now Ballydesmond) road on the morning of January 27th, 1951. We remained in position throughout the day, during which it rained all the time, but the enemy did not pass. We retired to billets that night in the area and resumed our positions next morning about 9.30 a.m. Amongst the members of the column present were: Denis Galvin, Dan Vaughan, Bill Moylan, Dave McAuliffe, Seán Healy, Con Morley and two others. There were in addition a number of men from Kiskeam and Kingwilliamstown Companies as follows: Dan Guiney, John C. Murphy, John D. O'Connor, Owen Daly, Tim J. Cronin, Jack Leary and Dan Flynn (Kiskeam); Tom Herlihy, Dan Fitzgerald, Con Finucane Martin Murphy and John Jones (Kingwilliamstown). All members of the local companies were armed with shotguns, while the column had rifles. In addition, there was a Hotchkiss gun manned by Bill Moylan and Seán Healy.

The attacking party was divided into three sections placed as follows:

(a) South of the road was a section of about 6 riflemen. They were using as cover some loose rocks and large stones as there was no other suitable cover. This party were extended over a distance of about 40 yards.

(b) The shotgunmen from the local companies, to the number of about a dozen, were on high ground to the north of the road behind a sod fence. They were within about 20 yards of the road. I was with this party, which was in charge of Dan Vaughan.

(c) The Hotchkiss gun, manned by Bill Moylan and Seán Healy, was on the south side of the road

but about 40 yards further east than the riflemen at (a). This section were on the edge of a small bend which enabled them to see along the straight stretch to the west which they were able to enfilade. Seán Moylan, who was in charge of the operation, was in position with this section.

Sometime after midday the scouts in position to the west signalled the approach of two cars. The leading car drove into the position, but just as it reached a point about 30 yards from the position held by the machine-gun party the driver saw the trench which had been cut in the roadway. He first attempted to put on speed but then changed his mind, as he apparently came to the conclusion that he could not get the car across the trench. He pulled up the car and the second car also halted. They immediately opened fire, at the same time jumping from their cars and taking cover behind the roadside fences. All sections of the ambush party then opened fire. The scrap went on for about 30 minutes and the enemy then shouted that they would surrender. All sections of our men except the Hotchkiss gun crew then left their positions and came on to the road. We found that all members of the enemy convoy were wounded. They included Divisional Commissioner Holmes, R.I.C., who was seriously wounded. It was then discovered that one man had been killed - he was, I think, the driver of the leading car. While collecting the enemy arms and looking after the wounded some of our scouts reported the approach of another car so we had to take cover again, but when this car arrived we found that it was driven by a school inspector. He was held up and the wounded men were loaded on to his car. He was then ordered to take them to the nearest hospital.

We got seven rifles, a repeating shotgun and a .45 Webley revolver as a result of this scrap. One of the cars, which was damaged by our fire, was burned. The second car was driven away by Bill Moylan and Seán Healy with the Hotchkiss gun, while the remainder of us withdrew towards Kingwilliamstown and then north to Lighthouse. We had only reached this area when we heard several volleys of shots from the direction of Kingwilliamstown. It was now about 5 p.m. We later discovered that the shooting had been done by a strong force of military who had come out from Tralee in 17 lorries. We took up positions in the Lighthouse area but the enemy convoy moved off towards Knocknagree, still shooting. They must have thought that we had gone that way but we were at the opposite side of Kingwilliamstown - so they were moving away from us. When it was clear that the enemy had moved off, our whole company withdrew to some houses in the area, where we had refreshments, and then we of the local companies were ordered to return to our home areas. The members of the column moved to new billets.

On the day following this ambush British military arrived from Tralee in several lorries and set fire to the following houses: the drapery shop of Tim Vaughan; the grocery shop of Wm. McAuliffe. About a week later a second party arrived and destroyed the local Post Office owned by Tim O'Sullivan.

From February to May, 1921, I moved about the area as called upon but we failed to make contact with the British on any of these occasions. In addition to being available for the column when required, I was engaged nearly fulltime on the destruction of enemy lines

of communication, digging trenches, demolishing bridges and blocking roads. While engaged on these activities I was unlucky enough to miss the messenger sent to call me for the Clonbanin engagement. During this period four bridges were destroyed in the area, viz. Lisrobin Bridge, Knockrourke Bridge, Clamper Bridge, Kiskeam Bridge. There were, in addition, six trenches which had to be continually kept open as the enemy, when in the area, were commandeering civilians to fill them up.

The enemy carried out a big round-up in the area on the night of May 15th, 1921, and early next morning. I was captured with the Brigade O/C (Seán Moylan). The enemy party detrucked some considerable distance from Kiskeam district and moved in across country on foot under cover of darkness. I was removed to Kanturk military post, then to Cork, Spike Island, and finally to Bere Island, where I was interned until the general release of internees in December, 1921.

My rank at the Truce - Volunteer and Column member.
Strength of the Kiskeam Company - about 140.

On release from Bere Island I rejoined my unit and was sent to a camp at Freemount to learn how to use a Thompson gun. I was in this camp for about 10 days. Early in January, 1922, I went to Mallow to take up guard duty at Quartertown Mills which had been taken over by the workers. I later joined the maintenance party at Mallow military barracks when it was taken over from the British. In February, 1922, I was transferred to Buttevant barracks, where I remained until the outbreak of the Civil War. Having taken part in the line

fighting in the Limerick and Waterford areas, I returned to Newmarket Battalion area, where I took part in a number of engagements against Free State forces until I was taken prisoner in November, 1922. I was taken to Limerick Prison and later to Newbridge, where I was detained until January, 1924.

Signed:

Daniel Flynn
(Daniel Flynn)

Date:

September 1st 1955
September 1st 1955.

Witness:

P. O'Donnell (P. O'Donnell)

(Investigator)

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRS MILITAIRES 1913-21
NO. W.S. 1240