

N. S. 1,374

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21
No. W.S. 1.374

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

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1.374

Witness

Timothy Condon,
Coalpit,
Cullen,
Millstreet,
Co. Cork.

Identity.

Q/M. Millstreet Battalion
Cork II Brigade, I.R.A.

Subject.

Cullen Company, Millstreet Battalion,
Cork II Brigade, 1917-1922.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. S.2613

Form B.S.M. 2

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STATEMENT BY TIM CONDON,

Coalpit, Cullen, Millstreet, County Cork.

I was born on August 1st, 1890, at Coalpit, Cullen. My parents were farmers. I was educated at Cullen national school until I reached the age of 15 years, when I left school to go to work on my father's farm.

I joined the Cullen Company of Irish Volunteers early in 1917. The strength of the unit at the time was about 25. The officers who were elected were:

O/C - Daniel T. Riordan
1st Lt. - Humphrey O'Donoghue.
2nd Lt. - Dan Moynihan
Adjt. - Tim Condon (witness).

Amongst the other members of the unit were: Matt Murphy, Peter Lucey, Tom Hickey and Con McSweeney. There was no visiting organiser in the area at the time. The company was a unit of Rathmore Battalion, Kerry 11 Brigade.

The only training carried out was close order foot drill. Parades were held in the fields in the area, usually at night or on Sunday evenings. The only arms held by the unit were a few shotguns which were the property of members, while, I think, one of the officers had a revolver.

During 1917 all Volunteers joined Sinn Féin and helped to organise a Sinn Féin club in the area. At the same time the usual parades and drills were held. There was no other activity to report.

Early in 1918 the unit was transferred from Rathmore Battalion, Kerry 11 Brigade, to Millstreet Battalion, Cork Brigade. The companies in the latter battalion at this time were: Millstreet, Rathduane, Dooneen, Clara, Cullen, Derrynagree, Keale Bridge, Rathcoole and Kilcorney. The officers of Millstreet Battalion were:

O/C - Con J. Meany (Sonny)
 Vice O/C - Denis O'Brien
 Adjt.- Jerh. Crowley
 Q/M - John Lehane (I think).

The conscription scare in the spring of 1918 led to a big increase in membership of the company. Nearly every able-bodied man in the district joined the Volunteers and the strength rose to about 150. There was no change in officers. All shotguns in the area were surrendered voluntarily to the Volunteers and we now had about 30/35 shotguns with about 300 rounds of ammunition. We had, in addition, five or six revolvers which had been purchased by individual members. During this period weapons of all sorts were being fashioned from slash hooks to pikes. All cartridges were loaded with buckshot. When the conscription threat had passed, the strength fell to about 100 but it remained constant at this figure to the Truce on July 11th, 1921.

There was no political activity in connection with the general election in December, 1918, as the Sinn Féin candidate for the area was returned unopposed.

Early in 1919 Cork Brigade was divided into three brigades. Our battalion (Millstreet) became a unit in Cork 11 Brigade. The other battalions were: Newmarket, Mallow, Kanturk, Charleville, Fermoy and 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.

There was nothing unusual doing during the greater portion of 1919. The usual parades and drills were held, but training was becoming slightly more advanced as scouting and field exercises were being practised.

On November 17th, 1919, representatives of the Munster and Leinster Bank, Millstreet, who were travelling with cash to the branch office at Knocknagree were held up by armed raiders at Ballydaly Cross on the Millstreet-Killarney road and the sum of about £18,000 was seized. The R.I.C. (Royal Irish Constabulary) in the area interrogated me in connection with the raid; also a number of Volunteers in the area were questioned. Later it began to become the general view of some members of the public that the raid had been by the I.R.A. and, as a result, the Brigade O/C carried out an investigation into the whole affair. The investigations revealed that the robbery had been carried out by a gang from Millstreet area, which included men named O'Brien (2), Pat Carmody, Michael O'Connor, Michael Murphy and Buckley. All these were arrested by the I.R.A. towards the end of April, 1920. They were tried by brigade officers and deported.

The type of training as the year 1920 progressed became more advanced. The members of the company, in co-operation with neighbouring companies, often met on Sunday afternoons and took part in field exercises, with special attention to the best methods of advancing and

retreating under cover. About this time also all members got an opportunity of having some target practice with a miniature (.22) rifle which had been obtained from Bn. H.Q.

When the general order for the destruction of evacuated enemy posts was issued by G.H.Q. at Easter, 1920, there was only one such post in our area - Cullen R.I.C. barracks. The building was the property of one of our own supporters and we did not like to destroy the building for this reason. The Brigade O/C (Liam Lynch) was in the area at the time and was consulted in the matter. He suggested that the owner of the building should move from his own home into the evacuated barracks. This was agreed to and the members of the local company transferred the furniture and effects of the owner from his home to the barrack. In the circumstances, the evacuated building was not destroyed.

The members of the company (Cullen) co-operated with Rathmore on the occasion of the attack on Rathmore barracks in June, 1920. None of the members took part in the actual attack but all were engaged in blocking roads and cutting communications in their own area. These activities were in charge of the company officers.

In August, 1920, I was appointed clerk to the parish court. The members of the court were: Jeremiah O'Keefe, James Dennehy and Dan Sweeney. The chairmanship of the court rotated amongst the members. Courts were usually held in the old church at Cullen about once a month. There were never very many cases and those submitted to the court were mainly in respect of trespass of a minor nature. All were settled amicably.

During the spring and summer of 1921 I was continually engaged with the other members of the company in demolishing bridges, cutting trenches and arranging scouts and guards for the columns when passing through or billeted in the area.

A large force of enemy troops converged on the Cullen area from Kanturk and Millstreet early in June, 1921. They arrested a considerable number of people, amongst them many I.R.A. men of the local company. About this time I was appointed Battalion Q/M, as John Lehane, who held the post, was arrested. I was made responsible for checking dumps and their contents. This necessitated constant visits to the various company areas to ensure that arms and stores were safely stowed away and kept in good condition. I was engaged in activities in connection with this appointment up to the Truce on July 11th, 1921.

Rank at Truce - Q/M Millstreet Battalion, Cork 11 Brigade. The strength of the battalion was about 600.

During the Truce I attended a brigade training camp at Liscarrol for about a fortnight. This camp was run by Paddy O'Brien, who was now O/C of the new Cork 1V Brigade. This brigade comprised five battalions at the western end of old Cork 11 Brigade, viz. Millstreet, Mallow, Kanturk, Newmarket and Charleville. The training officers at the camp were Seán Breen and Tom Roche. All present at the camp underwent a course of training in arms drill, field exercises etc. They were also instructed in the use and care of small arms, machine-guns

and mines. Following the termination of the brigade camp I took part in a battalion camp at Cullen and in the organisation of similar camps in each of the company areas. I returned home in April, 1922, as my services were required on the farm.

Signed: Timothy Condon
(Timothy Condon)
Date: 13th March 1956
13th March, 1956.

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

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