

**ORIGINAL**

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 1671

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1671.

**Witness**

Michael Hynes,  
Borrisoleigh,  
Thurles,  
Co. Tipperary.

**Identity.**

Adjt., 2nd Battn., 2nd (Mid) Tipperary Bgde.  
Brigade Adjutant, " " " "

**Subject.**

2nd Battn., Mid Tipperary Bgde., and  
1st Battn., Flying Column, 1917-24.

**Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.**

Nil.

File No S. 2992.

Form B.S.M. 2

# ORIGINAL

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BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 1,671

STATEMENT BY MR. MICHAEL HYNES,

Borrisoleigh, Thurles, Co. Tipperary.

(Formerly Adjutant, Tipperary No.2 Brigade.)

I was born in the year 1889 in the parish of Castleiney, Co. Tipperary, and our home was situated on the borders of Templetuohy parish. As a result, I was first educated at Templetuohy national school which was only a mile away. At the age of fourteen, I studied under private tutors, and in 1907 I studied in Skerry's Civil Service College, Dublin, for the Customs and Excise, and bank examinations. Owing to my health breaking down, I had to give up, and I then spent a couple of years at home. I next spent three years at business, and in 1914 I was employed by C.I.E. (then G.S. & W. Railway Company) as timekeeper at their works in Laffansbridge, and later at Lisduff.

While at Laffansbridge, I became very friendly with the late D.P. Walsh, who later on became Assistant Quartermaster General of the Free State Army. A workman's train used convey a number of men from Fethard to work at Laffansbridge which was the source of supply of crushed stone to maintain the railway lines. As a result, there was a magazine there which always held a couple of tons of explosives, and, although it was guarded by R.I.C., I was able, owing to my position, to secure some, and to send it on to D.P. Walsh.

I left the Great Southern & Western Railway late in 1915, as I was required at home for farm work.

Early in 1913 or 1914, I had been a member of the Volunteers, but left, as I opposed the element which

supported John E. Redmond and the Irish Parliamentary Party.

In 1917, we reorganised an Irish Volunteer Company in Templetuohy. In 1918, with the threat of conscription, our numbers rapidly increased, and I was appointed Company Captain. We carried out several raids for arms, and we also made some rough grenades, and loaded and collected shotgun ammunition. As I was suffering from a bullet wound in the hand, the late M. Dwyer, Templetuohy, was appointed Captain to carry on, and later on the Company was in charge of my brother, Seán Hynes, and for a period under Jim Russell, while my brother was interned. He was first arrested in 1918, and sentenced to two years for reading the Sinn Féin manifesto. He took part in the big row in Belfast jail, and was released in April, 1919.

As we had no election contest in Mid Tipperary during the 1918 general election, I went to Leix to assist the late Kevin O'Higgins. On a couple of occasions, we marched a big party of Volunteers to the election meetings there. It was a strong Irish Party constituency, but Sinn Féin won the seat by a good majority.

A few days after my brother's release in April 1919, I and five others were arrested for collecting for the Gaelic League without a permit. I was sentenced to two months in Limerick prison, and the others were released. While in Limerick prison, Dan Flavin, Listowel, was the political prisoners O/C, and I was the Vice O/C.

I was released a few days after the famous Knocklong rescue, and was in Thurles with some of my

jail pals when District Inspector Hunt of the R.I.C. was shot. I was raided for, that night, and, from then until the Truce, I was on the run.

From that period on, there was continuous activity, sniping barracks, blocking roads, etc. Early in 1920, I was appointed Adjutant of the 2nd Battalion, 2nd (or Mid) Tipperary Brigade. The British decided to close Moyne and Loughmore R.I.C. barracks, and in April 1920 we destroyed both of these evacuated barracks. The late George Plunkett made a general inspection of the Brigade area at that time, and I travelled around with him and the Brigade O/C, Jimmy Leahy. My brother had been again arrested, and sent to Wormwood Scrubbs, and, as our home was beside the road and only one mile from Templetuohy, it was raided by British forces at least twice daily.

We continued sniping attacks on Templetuohy barracks, and the British established a second post there. The hall, which was opposite the barracks, was taken over, and about forty Black and Tans and R.I.C. men were stationed there. Their position made it impossible for us to launch a big attack. In addition, we were only three miles from Templemore which was garrisoned by about 1,500 British military, 120 Auxiliaries and 50 R.I.C. men.

The first day (14th August, 1920) that the party arrived in Templemore to shoot District Inspector Wilson, I met them and spent the day with them, but he was not to be seen that day. He was shot the following Monday, the 16th August, but I was not there, and Templemore was wrecked and looted by British forces that night. A few days afterwards, the so-called miracles of the

famous bleeding statues in Templemore commenced. For three weeks, the town was thronged with pilgrims, and all the Volunteers who were on the run did duty there daily. The late Archbishop McClune of Australia came to Templemore during that period, and interviewed a few of us there, but gave us no idea as to his mission.

During this period too, a friend of mine, Rev. J. Lanigan, who was home on holidays from the United States of America, fixed up a means of tapping the telephone wires between Templemore and Templemore, and for a period we were able to intercept messages and, on a few occasions, learned about raids that were to take place.

An attempt was made to burn our home by Black and Tans in October 1920. All our hay, straw and some outhouses were destroyed, but a few of us who were staying in a house nearby rushed to the place, and the Tans fled.

At that time, the raids on my home were so frequent that no workman would remain in the house, and my father, sister and a servant girl had to bear the brunt. On a few occasions, the Black and Tans threatened to shoot my father and sister. During a couple of these raids, every turkey, hen and duck were killed and taken away, and the famous or infamous Captain Phibbs was in charge, and condoned it.

Previous to this, an ambush had been carried out at Barnane, and that finished the crowds coming to view the statues at Templemore. We had parties, under arms, out on the night of the ambush, hoping to attack

some of the British raiders who were expected out, to destroy creameries, but their attention was again confined to Templemore, and more houses were burned and looted there.

Pressure by the enemy on our area was becoming very strong, and I organised a Volunteer Company in Leix, on the adjoining county border. I got a good Company going there, and they were anxious to do their bit, but the leaders in Leix wanted things kept quiet.

Early in 1921, the Battalion Quartermaster, Joseph Ryan, and myself joined the 1st Battalion Flying Column, and were attached to it, off and on, until the Truce. At periods, we travelled back to the 2nd Battalion area, to assist in whatever was doing. Two of these operations I often think of.

The first was an attempt to blow up bridges crossing the river Suir, about one mile from Templemore, on two main roads. We were stationed about four hundred yards from the town, to prevent military or R.I.C. leaving. We had a poor chance if they came.

The second was the destruction of the Auxiliaries' headquarters in Templemore. The Auxiliaries had left it, but were about to re-occupy it. It was the residence of Lord Carden, and was situated within a quarter of a mile of the military barracks. The job took all night, as it was a huge place, and all the windows had been boarded up. Quite a lot of noise was made, breaking in, and the military could have made a haul that night, as the crowd were again relying principally on our two rifles to protect them.

Late in June 1921, I was one of a party who

had the unique experience of being ambushed by R.I.C. instead of ambushing them.

My brother and I had received information about supplies arriving by train for Templemore military barracks, and we decided at a Battalion Council meeting to capture and destroy them.

We mobilised a column, and myself and P. Fogarty, Clonmore, boarded the train at Lisduff, and we found out what waggons contained the supplies. When we arrived where the column waited, the train was halted, and we removed the military supplies. That evening, we were told that the military and Tans were out searching for us, and, when we reached Ballinree, near Castleiney, the Tans, who were entrenched in a grove, opened fire on us. I was on my own, at one side of a ditch, after crossing, and the remainder were on the other side and could not be seen by the Tans. I had crossed in the open and, although the range was only seventy-three yards, I escaped. . . When we got into a position and returned the fire, the Tans cleared out in a hurry. There were no casualties.

The 2nd Southern Division had been formed for some time, with the late Ernie O'Malley as Divisional O/C, and when the Brigade Adjutant, Michael Kennedy, was arrested, O'Malley appointed me as his successor. For a time then, I worked with the Brigade Staff, Jimmy Leahy, Tommy Meagher, Jim Stapleton, and also with P. Kinnane and M. Small, Battalion O/C's, getting arrears of work cleared up. We worked in a dug-out, situated near Killough Hill, and the local companies gave us every help. During this period, raids by

the British forces were frequent, as we were badly wanted men, but we never stayed or slept in houses.

We still worked in the dug-out when the Truce came. Then, after a time, we moved to the Brigade training camp at Barnane where we remained until we took over Templemore military barracks in February, 1922. As the Brigade O/C and the Brigade Vice O/C were in Beggars Bush barracks on business, I had to arrange for the taking over, and I must say the British garrison were by no means glad to see me. With one exception, a Major Neville, they were a surly lot, and they showed their teeth completely the day we marched in, to take over, when they wilfully destroyed a lot of property.

Shortly after occupying the barracks, the split developed, but no one ever thought that civil war would develop, and that things would become so bitter. We were surrounded in Templemore by a Dublin crowd of Treatyites, but they met with no success. The second attack on the barracks was made by Free State troops under Jerry Ryan, although the previous night he had given a guarantee that we would not touch the place.

After vacating the barracks, we travelled to Carrick-on-Suir, but, after a time, were sent back to keep things going in our own area. The Civil War was then raging. We had very few men, as our main party were captured on their way back from Carrick-on-Suir. They travelled into Leix and billeted there. We were sold by one of the locals and surrounded. When I heard they were there, I sent a despatch to the Column Commander to leave at once and cross into Templemohy, but they were surrounded when the



despatch rider arrived. Although he was only a young lad, Jimmy Casey from Templemore, he made sure to swallow the despatch.

I escaped arrest until the eve of the general election in August 1923, and then I was interned in Templemore, Gormanston, Mountjoy prison and later on in Tintown and Limerick prison. I was sent to Limerick to be tried for raiding a bank, but a few final words will explain.

When we decided to vacate the barracks in Templemore, we owed a number of shopkeepers quite a sum of money. We had funds of our own, but could not contact the man who was holding them, so we decided to procure enough from the two local banks to pay our debts. The Brigade Quartermaster and myself went to each bank, accompanied by unarmed men, and explained the position to the managers. We got £500 in each bank, and the Brigade Quartermaster took charge of this. We gave the banks an official receipt, signed by the Brigade Quartermaster and myself, as we were sure that our own funds would be available to settle. The managers stated in court that there was no armed raid, and unfortunately one of them dropped dead while giving evidence. The case hung fire for some time, and then was thrown overboard by District Justice Flood who said it should never have been brought. It was brought up, at the instigation of some of the Free State officers, to show their bitterness, but, up to this day, I fail to understand why I was the only one charged.

After my release in April 1924, I worked at home, but was still active if required. I was assisted at the

bye-election in Leix in 1926, at the personal request of de Valera. Art O'Connor contested the seat as a Sinn Féin candidate, and was only beaten by a few hundred votes.

Later, at the inception of Fianna Fáil, I worked hard for the success of that party.

During the years from 1926 to 1931, I was frequently raided, and was arrested on several occasions by Free State forces, for no apparent reason.

SIGNED: *Micéal Stynes*

DATE: *10/9/57*

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WITNESS *J. Grace*