

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURU STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 1,702

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1702.

Witness

Seán O'Carroll,
"Boys Town",
Knockgraffon,
Cahir,
Co. Tipperary.

Identity.

Quartermaster, 6th Battalion, 3rd Tipperary Brigade,
I.R.A.
1917 - 1921.

Subject.

3rd Tipperary Brigade, I.R.A.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil.

File No. S. 3012.

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STATEMENT BY MR. SEÁN O'CARROLL,

"Boy's Town", Knockgraffon, Cahir, Co. Tipperary.

I was born in the year 1895 at Hugginstown, Co. Kilkenny. In 1911 I entered the firm of P. Bourke & Co., Carrick-on-Suir, as an apprentice to the drapery trade, and remained there until the end of 1917.

We had at that time a football team in Hugginstown of which all the local young men, including my brothers and myself, were members.

The idea of starting a Sinn Féin Club originated with the football club, and early in 1917 we held a meeting on the historic "Commons" - the scene of the battle of Carrickshock - and formed a Sinn Féin Club.

The organising of a company of Volunteers came as a natural sequel, and all the members of the Sinn Féin Club, of military age, came into the Volunteers. I was one of the company's first drill instructors.

About November, 1917, I left my job in Carrick-on-Suir, and went to Messrs. Lyons & Co., "The Arcade", Tipperary. Jim Hickey of the same firm was already in the Volunteers and, within a week, he had me initiated into the Volunteers in Tipperary town where there were two companies.

Tom Rogers was at that time Captain of B. Company, and the routine consisted of drilling, lectures and sometimes route marches on fine, frosty nights. Seán Duffy was Captain of A. Company, and at that time the two companies used parade together.

Rogers and Duffy were arrested in 1918, and Seán Allen and myself were appointed Captains (Temporary) in their places. After some time, on instructions from G.H.Q., they accepted bail and were released.

Under those conditions, they could not assume duty again, at least not in public, so Allen and I carried on for some time. Eventually Tom Rogers took on duty again as O/C of B. Company, and I became a sort of inspection officer for the company.

That was during a martial law period, and the four sections of the company used meet separately, as it was considered that the full company meeting together might attract too much notice.

When Andy Houlihan (who was with me in the Carrick raid, to which I will refer later) left for Limerick, I became Company Quartermaster in his place, and later Battalion Quartermaster in succession to Dinny Lacey.

The following notes may be of interest. When preparing them, I confined myself to incidents which may not already have been covered for the Bureau by the other witnesses from the 3rd Tipperary Brigade.

The Gelnite Raid at Carrick-on-Suir:

Before going to work in Tipperary town in 1917, I had, as I have already mentioned, worked for some years in Carrick-on-Suir and, of course, had numerous friends there.

Some time in the spring of 1918, I learned from Miss Margaret Butler, the accountant in the hardware firm of John Hearne, Carrick-on-Suir, that there was a considerable quantity of gelnite kept in the firm's

magazine or strong room.

The employees of the County Council used take out the required amount of gelignite for blasting operations, on production of a requisition order from the R.I.C.

At that time, nearly all the important Volunteer officers in Tipperary, such as, Sean Treacy, Dan Breen, Seumas Robinson, Dinny Lacey, Maurice Crowe and Con Moloney, were nearly all their time around Barlow's of Shrough where they had a headquarters.

When the matter of the gelignite was reported to them, they became very interested, and decided it was worth further investigation. Eventually, Andy Houlihan and myself were sent to Carrick-on-Suir to try and get hold of the stuff.

We went down to Carrick-on-Suir by train, taking bicycles with us, on the evening of April 30th, 1918, and interviewed a few people whom we had been told to contact, and who, it was supposed, would give us any assistance we required.

The interview was not satisfactory, from our point of view. In fact, the people we met were not in favour of doing the job at all, and more or less talked us out of doing it that night.

Having collected our bicycles, we were trying to make up our minds if we would catch the train back to Tipperary (the last train for two days, May 1st being a national holiday in protest against the passing of the Conscription Bill) when we ran into Tom Walsh, a member of the staff of John Hearne's.

We learned from Tom that the R.I.C. had been in

that day, to take away the gelignite for safety sake, and that Miss Butler bluffed them out of it, and asked them to come back again when the boss was there, and let him deal with the matter; so it was a case of now or never, as far as we were concerned.

Tom let us in at the side door, which was down a lane, and opened the magazine for us. Andy and myself then started carrying away, under our arms, the parcels of gelignite, and, after three or four journeys backward and forward, we had all the stuff transferred to the back yard of a neighbouring public house called Bourke's.

Mr. John Hearne used have a game of cards in the local club nearly every night, and we were on tenterhooks lest he might arrive back before we had the operation completed. However, nothing happened.

Having got that far, we decided to walk down to the Town Hall and see who was in the Young Ireland Club; and here we met some Volunteers, including Jim Babbington, John Loughman, Jack O'Keefe, Mick Bourke and Davy Power.

We gave them an idea of how the land lay, and asked for any assistance they could give, to shift the stuff to a place of safety out the country.

Davy Power, who worked in Tom Carroll's, another ironmongery firm in the town, told us that the same applied in their firm as in Hearne's, and that there was a considerable quantity of explosives in their store on the quay.

Unfortunately, Davy had not the key of this store, but he gave us all necessary information about the lay-out of the place.

We then decided to shift the stuff we had got in Hearne's to a graveyard (disused) in Deerpark, about a mile outside the town, and then return and do Carroll's.

After securely dumping the stuff at Deerpark, we returned to town, and proceeded to investigate the position at Tom Carroll's store. Tom Reidy, who had joined us, climbed a telegraph pole to gain admission to the yard.

Once inside, he opened up the gate, and we all walked in. We found everything as Davy Power had told us, except one thing, and that one thing turned out to be very important.

We found two or three barrels (kegs, about the size of a quarter cask) of blasting powder, and over a hundred pounds of gelignite. We found a pony in the stable, with his trap in readiness, but, alas, we failed, after searching high and low, to find the pony's harness.

This was very awkward, as we had already loaded up all the explosives on the trap, and, after racking our brains trying to find a way out, we found there was nothing for it but to push the trap ourselves.

Things were running at fever pitch at that time. It was during the conscription period, but, even so, it is hard to imagine seven or eight sane men, pushing a pony's trap, full of explosives, through the streets of Carrick-on-Suir in the small hours of the morning.

Our luck was still in, and we got away with it. Carroll's stuff was also taken to Deerpark, but this lot was buried on the banks of the river Suir.

While the burying was going on, Jim Babbington

and myself roll the trap back towards Carrick, intending to put it back in the yard where it came from, so as not to start any police activities too soon.

Nearing the "Old" Bridge, we saw two policemen standing out, in bold relief, on the bridge. They were the first we had seen during the night, so we dropped our trap, and silently stole away.

Andy and myself then cycled to Ballyneill to see a man called Jimmie Manning, who it was said might provide transport to get the stuff away to a safe place. Jimmie was a teacher. He interviewed us from the top bedroom window, and as he did not know either of us, it was hard to blame him for being non committal and non co-operative. We were now somewhat off the beaten track, but, after going astray a few times, we finally got into Clonmel as the town was beginning to wake up.

At Larry Tobin's we had a nice breakfast which we could do with nicely, after being out all night and with nothing to eat since we left Tipperary about five o'clock the previous evening.

About a week or two later, we shifted the stuff to Leahy's of the Priest's Road, near Cahir, and from there it came later into the Tipperary town area.

There was one strange feature about the whole thing. It never got any publicity, and was never reported in the papers. Evidently, the police cloaked everything up, for some purpose of their own.

They evidently had instructions to collect the stuff and did not do so; and then, when they discovered we had beaten them to it, it was very embarrassing for them.

The Case of O'Dwyer -v- O'Dwyer:

Some time about the end of 1918, the I.R.A. in Tipperary town got word that a Mr. O'Dwyer (Rock), Roxboro, was contemplating taking an action in court against a Mr. Ed. O'Dwyer of Barronstown, for the loss of a mare.

As far as I remember, the Republican courts were not functioning at the time, but it was decided to try and get the parties to bring the case before a Volunteer court; and when you consider the background of the parties concerned, you can afford to give the I.R.A. a clap on the back for succeeding in getting them to bring the case before a court of Volunteer officers.

Edward O'Dwyer was a pretty extensive farmer, and was a brother of Sir Michael O'Dwyer, ex Governor of the Punjab, and also had a nephew a Captain in the British Army.

Sir Michael O'Dwyer had at the time got a good deal of unfavourable publicity over the massacre at Amritsar, which proved later to be unjustified. However, at that time, his name was mud in Republican circles, and consequently it surprised many people to see his brother agreeing to have a case in which he was vitally concerned brought before a Republican court. The sitting of the court took place in the Gaelic League rooms (Jack McCarthy's of O'Brien Street, Tipperary) where Professor Sam Fahy, a brother of Frank Fahy, used teach Irish.

There were three judges, viz., Michael Kirby, an Assistant County Surveyor, and lately released from Belfast jail, Sean Duffy, Commandant of the local Battalion, and myself.

O'Dwyer (Rock) was claiming damages for the loss of a mare which got knocked into a dyke by a pony and trap, driven by Mrs. E. O'Dwyer. The accident took place in the avenue leading from the public road to Mr. E. O'Dwyer's house. The avenue was Mr. E. O'Dwyer's private property.

The mare happened to be in foal, and probably a bit helpless, with the result that she died from the effects of the fall.

O'Dwyer (Rock) lived almost opposite to E. O'Dwyer's entrance gate. He kept numerous animals, without having the necessary accommodation for them. Consequently, they were let stray around the roads and on to anybody's property they liked, and were, of course, continually trespassing on E. O'Dwyer's lands.

After hearing all the evidence, the court unanimously decided in favour of Ed. O'Dwyer, and dismissed the plaintiff's case. The latter gentleman did not receive the verdict too well, and immediately began to make threats. However, a call from a couple of Volunteers, a few nights later, convinced him it was to his own interest to behave himself.

The background of the case was that E. O'Dwyer and his wife were at the time a middle-aged couple, who wanted nothing except to be allowed to live in peace and quietness. On the other hand, O'Dwyer (Rock) was an aggressive cross-grained individual who tried to have the best of everybody he met.

It is of interest to note that Sir Michael O'Dwyer was assassinated some years later in London by an Indian. O'Dwyer (Rock) was murdered at his own home, years later,

and, as far as I can remember, nobody was ever brought to justice for the crime.

The Petrol Raid at Limerick Junction Railway Station:

Nearly all the time during the war of Independence, petrol was a pretty vital commodity. Most of the time, it was not very plentiful, and sometimes, if a job was coming off, it might be as well to have it handy instead of going to buy it from the local dealers.

Besides its orthodox use of running a motor car, it was sometimes used to spray and set on fire a barracks which was being attacked. Consequently, it was considered essential to have a supply handy that could be got at any time and without any questions being asked.

Quite a number of the railway staff, working at the Limerick Junction station, were in the I.R.A. and included, amongst others, Jerry Fitzpatrick and Andy Kennedy. They kept their eyes open for an opportunity to get some petrol at the junction.

About July 1921, the two companies in Tipperary town ordered a certain number of men to mobilise for duty at a spot alongside the Junction where everything was in readiness for the operation.

On the line was a string of railway wagons, and the one opposite a stile in the hedge was full of petrol in tins. One man, on top of the wagon, handed down the tins, two at a time, to a man below who, in turn, passed them over the stile to the men there waiting to receive them.

Every man, in turn, moved away with his two tins which were carried that night to the old stand on Barronstown race-course, and stored there for one night.

The following night, about sixty men from A. and B. Companies carried the petrol across country from Barronstown to ~~K~~ilross creamery where it was finally stored.

Some of the boys discovered that two tins of petrol can be quite a burden, when you have hawked them across country for three or four miles during the night.

The spot, where the petrol was taken from the wagon, was very close to the R.I.C. barracks at the Junction, so that it was necessary to operate in absolute silence.

The proposed Raid on Tipperary Courthouse:

The old Volunteer Hall, which was situated in a laneway at the top of O'Brien Street in Tipperary town, had been the principal meeting place for the Volunteers almost from the formation of that force.

It was used for Volunteer parades, lectures, dances, etc., etc., and during the conscription period, when an all-night watch was kept on the British military posts, the Volunteer Hall was headquarters for the men coming off duty.

One night, during a dance in the Hall, early in 1918 I think, Sean O'Meara stuck his head in the door and beckoned me to come outside. Willie Hartnett was also called out.

Sean explained that Sean Treacy and Dan Breen were contemplating carrying out a raid on the courthouse for gelignite that was supposed to be stored there.

We were to go on to the courthouse and await the arrival of Dan Breen and Sean Treacy. O'Meara, Hartnett and myself arrived there, and found Matt Barlow there already, on the same errand.

Before very long, there was a single shot fired in the direction of the Main Street which was about two hundred yards away, and we could hear the sound of somebody running.

Con Moloney came on the scene soon afterwards, and told us the raid was all off, for the time being, and to make ourselves scarce as quickly as possible.

Evidently, when Treacy and Breen were on their way to the courthouse on bicycles, the police rushed from a laneway, and pulled Breen from the bike. Dan was armed with something in the nature of a spanner or iron bar, which he proposed to use as a jemmy to effect an entrance to the courthouse.

He used this bar on the policeman's head, who had pulled him from the bicycle, and made good his escape. The single shot was, I believe, fired by Treacy in order to show up the pursuit of the R.I.C.

I may add here that, in this case, as in many others, there was conflicting information as to whether there was any gelignite or not in the courthouse.

Seán Duffy and all the officers of the two local companies in the town were satisfied, after making investigations, that there was nothing there. On the other hand, all the Brigade Staff, then located around Shrough, had information that the gelignite was there at the time.

Cork, Belfast and Wormwood Scrubbs Prisons:

On Holy Thursday, 1920, I was arrested in Tipperary town, and taken to Cork jail. The police barracks at Hugginstown, Co. Kilkenny, (my native place) was

captured about a week before, and a policeman killed. That was the first aggressive action in Co. Kilkenny, and there were wholesale arrests around Hugginstown and other centres following the attack.

After about a fortnight in Cork jail, a big batch of us were transferred to Belfast in two destroyers. We were put on board in Cobh in the small hours of the morning, and anchored in Belfast Lough that night. The trip was a nightmare affair, with rough seas and the prisoners packed like sardines into the hold of the destroyer. Everybody was vomiting all over everybody else, so no wonder we did not look our best when we were ushered in to the boys already in Belfast jails.

Some of us had not long to wait in Belfast until we were on our way to Wormwood Scrubbs. This time, it was a small, if somewhat select, crowd that boarded the destroyer at Belfast, and were landed at Pembroke docks in Milford Haven, on the following day. There were only fifteen in this batch which included Frank Barrett (Clare), Pax Phelan (Dungarvan), P. Brazil and Sean Matthews (Waterford), D. Sullivan (Tralee), and all the remainder were from Hugginstown.

This trip was also pretty rough but, in this case, we spent most of the time up on deck, and, apart from being very sick, we had nothing else to complain about for a while.

Apart from the personnel of the destroyer, we had as escort a section of British military under a Lieutenant and an R.I.C. man, who was probably there for some legal technicality.

Some time during the day, we had a visit from a Naval Lieutenant who ordered us to proceed to clean up the

mess we had made of the deck. We were to sweep up the place, then get on our knees and mop up every particle, and make the deck as spotless as we found it. He brought along a bucket and mops.

Needless to say, we laughed at him, and this got his dander up properly, so much so that he announced he was going to put us in irons.

He proceeded to put his words into action and had two fellows in irons, when the policeman came on the scene, and informed the Lieutenant that he didn't think he was entitled to put us in irons. He said he had been back and forth several times, escorting prisoners, and had never seen them being asked to clean up the place after being sick, and anyhow, he added, both himself and the military had done their share of the vomiting and would clean it up.

Sick, sorry and tired, we arrived in Wormwood Scrubbs, about seven o'clock at night, and were put into what they called reception cells, pending the allocation of regular cells to us. We learned from the prison Chaplain the joyful news that a hunger-strike had started there that morning.

He also informed us that about a hundred prisoners were on strike, and sixty not on strike. We saw nobody else that night, but we had quite enough to chew on until morning.

In the exercise compound the following morning, we were made aware of the true position. It was that a hundred were on strike, sixty not on strike, and the two sections were at daggers drawn, each side trying to justify their own position.

Both sides put their case before us (the fifteen new arrivals). The hunger-strikers declared they had the approval of G.H.Q. for the strike, and the non-strikers maintained they had sent a special courier to Dublin and had been refused permission to strike.

Frank McGrath of Nenagh and Joe McDonagh were leading the strikers, and Jim Lawless, Dublin, was leader of the non-strikers. After we had heard both of their stories, we decided to adjourn and consider our own position.

We decided that, no matter who was right or who was wrong at the start, it was up to every man now to go on hunger-strike, and we appealed to the non-strikers to join in at once, and have a united front against the common enemy.

The appeal succeeded, and everybody went on strike that day. The strike was successful (it was the last successful hunger-strike), and the prisoners were all released, after doing from fifteen to twenty-one days on strike.

During the strike, I became one of the most popular prisoner in the place, for the simple reason that I was the only prisoner in the place who had cigarettes to give away, and cigarettes were things that everybody wanted very badly.

Before the start of the strike, there was a canteen in Wormwood Scrubbs in which tobacco, cigarettes, chocolate, etc., could be bought by the prisoners. When the strike started, the canteen closed down, and unfortunately the boys had forgotten to put in supplies in advance.

I went into jail, a non-smoker, but some of my friends did not seem to know that, and an accumulation of parcels containing cigarettes arrived for me in Belfast, the day before we left, and I took them with me.

By distributing them judiciously amongst my friends, they kept them going for quite a long time.

When the strike was on for about a week, the prisoners made a request to the Governor to leave the cell doors open at night, so that those who were bad could have some other come and visit them. The request was refused.

A few days later, every prisoner got certain instructions from the leaders of the hunger-strike which he was to carry out, at all cost.

At an appointed time, when coming in from exercise, every prisoner was to stand at his own cell door. When a whistle was blown, he would put the small bible from his cell in between the cell door and the jamb, and give the door one hard bang.

The operation was carried out to perfection, and every door in the place was whipped from the hinges as clean as a whistle. The doors were steel-plated, back and front, and rivetted in hundreds of places. The crash, when they started falling all over the place, was like an air raid.

The authorities tried several stunts to try to break the strike. They tried putting steaming ^{kippers} ~~suppers~~ into the cells with us, and our answer to that was to break the window and throw the suppers out.

They also brought a special man from the Home Office, to address us and promise all sorts of

concessions if we went off the strike. They tried to induce the prisoners to come out to the exercise compound to hear him, but our answer to that was to remain in bed.

Eventually, they began to release the prisoners in batches and take them to various hospitals around London. I was one of about fifty taken to Highgate Hill hospital; about another fifty were sent to Marlebone Road, while there were other batches at Batham, etc., etc.

The doctor who had to do with our batch at Highgate Hill did not seem to know anything about how hunger-strikers should be treated, or, if he did, he did not seem to worry.

People, after a long hunger-strike, say of fifteen-twenty days, should not be allowed any solid food for at least a week. We got as much bread and butter as we could eat, immediately after our arrival at the hospital, and every day for several days afterwards, we did practically nothing but eating and smoking until we all got violent heartburn and pains in the stomach.

The Tipperary Club:

The Tipperary Club, situated in James Street, Tipperary, was an ordinary social club and, in the years 1917-1920, had a membership of about a hundred.

The members were mostly shopkeepers, shop assistants, clerks and tradesmen. There were reading rooms, a card room and a billiard room.

The Club had been in existence since the early days of the century and, at one time, had a famous football team that could rival the Arravale Rovers or Bohercrowe at their best.

During the years of the trouble, there were, of course, a good few older members who were gone beyond soldiering and used spend the night playing cards. There was also a big crowd of young men, and nearly all those were in the I.R.A., some of them holding high rank.

These included the Moloney brothers(Con, Jim and Paddy), Maurice Crowe, Dinny Lacey, Sean Duffy, Seán Fitzpatrick, Tom Lynch, Jim Hickey, Paddy Dalton, Jerry Kiely and several others, and at least a half-dozen of its members lost their lives in the fight for freedom.

The Club was a very useful meeting place for the I.R.A., and it was an easy place to find somebody, if wanted in a hurry.

The British authorities evidently tumbled to the fact that a lot of the members were in the I.R.A. and using the place to promote illegal activities, and they decided to proclaim the place.

This meant that the Club had to be closed, and the billiard table dismantled, and all the old members, who had been going in there all their lives, were left out on the street.

I'm sure this was one of the very few cases in Ireland in which a social club was proclaimed.

Even after the order to close the Tipperary Club was issued, some of the members continued to go in there until, one night, British forces rushed the place and arrested three or four of the boys, including Jerry Kiely and Dan Noonan. If they had come ten minutes earlier, they would have found Jim Hickey and myself there too.

After Solohead Beg, martial law had been imposed,

and it remained in force and was more strictly enforced after Knocklong. In fact, things were then pretty hot in Tipperary.

Tipperary town was the hospital headquarters for the British military, and every casualty, either dead or wounded, from all over the county was taken into Tipperary. If there was a funeral, the British authorities ordered the business houses to close up. The I.R.A. then came along, and ordered them to remain open. It worked the reverse way when an I.R.A. man's funeral was on, and there were a good many of those also.

The National Volunteer Rifles:

At the time of the split in the National Volunteers, caused by John Redmond attempting to gain control of the organisation, the majority of the Volunteers outside of Dublin took Redmond's side; consequently, those who followed McNeill and his colleagues, were left completely unarmed, and the Volunteers in Tipperary town were no different from other centres in that respect.

When the Irish Volunteers began to reorganise again after 1916, they found themselves with very little arms. There was a sprinkling of revolvers of various vintage and doubtful effectiveness, but rifles were very scarce indeed.

The job of rearming the Volunteers was a slow and tedious business, using such means as buying a rifle or revolver (one at a time) from a British soldier and sometimes the ruse, used to get hold of the guns, was quite ingenious.

On one occasion, Sean Duffy was in touch with a British Tommy who promised to give him two service rifles for £4. Sean worked in the Irish House,

Tipperary, in the carpet and linoleum department, and he sent Christie Russell (the porter) with a roll of linoleum on a handcart which was supposed to be delivered to a certain building inside the barracks, for approval. The linoleum was taken into the building by the soldier, and the two rifles were packed into the roll, which was then returned to the handcart, rolled out the gate, and delivered to Duffy.

As an organisation, the National Volunteers had been dead for a long time, and the question that was worrying the I.R.A. was what had become of all the rifles they had, and where were they stored. They had not, of course, seen the light of day for some years.

The I.R.A. were naturally all out to get hold of these rifles, and were leaving no stone unturned, in trying to get the people whom they believed to have control of them, to hand them over, so that they could be made use of.

When you consider all the trouble we were going to, to get even one rifle, it is easy to imagine how we felt to have thirty-forty rifles tucked away somewhere in the town, and that we could not get at them.

I don't know who the go-between was that eventually succeeded in breaking down the resistance, but they were eventually handed over to the I.R.A. in reasonably good condition.

We had eight companies in the battalion. The rifles were packed up in canvas - four in each, as far as I remember - and representatives from each company were summoned, on a particular night, to collect them.

They assembled near the railway bridge on the

^u
Roxboro road, and the rifles were taken from a house in Redmond Square, through a laneway, and handed over to each company's representatives.

At this particular time, I was Battalion Quartermaster, in which position I succeeded Dinny Lacey, and it was principally my responsibility to have the rifles distributed to the companies and get them safely away.

When everything was in apple-pie order and the guns in the hands of each company, everybody felt happy about the whole business, and it looked as if we had made one very big step forward.

The first engagement in which those rifles figured was the Oola ambush in the late summer of 1920, and there was quite a few of them out that particular day.

From what I know of all the planning that was done before this ambush, it was all based on the assumption that we would be attacking a single Crossley tender, carrying ten or twelve soldiers, with, possibly, a despatch rider on a motor cycle in front.

This Crossley tender had been travelling the road from Limerick to Tipperary regularly for some time before, and it was surmised it used carry mail and despatches from one post to the other.

Consequently, when the Crossley tender did appear on the scene of the ambush, it looked as if everything was working according to plan.

The appearance of a "bigger and better" lorry on the scene almost immediately, and the fact that all the National Volunteer rifles were out of action after one shot had been fired, put a different complexion

on the situation. These rifles were Martini Henrys, a type discontinued in the British army, and their ejectors failed to eject the empty shell of a .303 cartridge.

We were not then aware that General Lucas was in the lorry, on his way to Tipperary, after being picked up around Pallas, but the British were probably under the impression that the I.R.A. were aware of his presence and that the ambush was staged, to try and recapture him.

Everything considered, the I.R.A were probably very lucky to escape in this engagement. The British were more intent on getting away with Lucas than with waiting to fight it out, and follow up the I.R.A. who, due to the failure of the rifles, were not in a very favourable position.

SIGNED: *Sean O'Carroll*

DATE: *3/12/57*

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