

W.S. 726

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRÉ MILÉATA 1913-21
No. W.S. 726

ROINN  COSANTA

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

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 726

Witness

Patrick Kelly,
67 Poddle Park,
Kimmage,
Dublin.

Identity,

Lieut. "G" Company 1st Battalion,
Dublin Brigade I.R.A.

Subject.

Commencement of the Civil War, Dublin,
1922.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. S 307

Form B.S.M. 2

W.S. 726

Statement of Patrick Kelly,

67, Poddle Park, Kimmage, Dublin.

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(x Poddle)
Statement of Patrick Kelly,
67 Poddle Park, Kimmage, Dublin,

Formerly 1st Lieutenant, "G" Company, 1st Battalion,
Dublin Brigade, Irish Republican Army.

The night before the Four Courts was attacked by Free State forces "G" Company was on parade at 5 Blackhall Street. We received orders from Commandant P. Holohan to report with all available men at 44 Parnell Square, where the 1st Battalion were parading. Some time after reporting there Captain Oman ordered me to take the men back to Blackhall Street and he would follow later. I was told of the impending attack on the Courts and that we might be attacked on the way, so I warned the men what to expect if we met Free State forces. I was instructed not to attack or commit any offensive act unless we were first attacked; we were to wait at Blackhall Street till we received further orders.

On arrival we took possession of the Hall and made preparations for attack. When Captain Oman arrived we sent out scouts to patrol the area and keep us informed of troop movements, etc. A member of the Free State forces entered the Hall. He was in uniform but unarmed. He asked numerous questions about what was happening. Thinking he might have been sent to ascertain our strength and intentions, I ordered his detention. When the Courts were attacked at midnight our scouts came in and reported the position of the attackers and Captain Oman sent all available information to Commandant Holohan and

asked for his instructions. We were told to remain where we were and await further instructions. We waited all next day until nightfall when we received orders to take over any hotel or strong building in our area. The only strong building in the area which offered a fair chance for defence was a private hotel, a corner house in Blackhall Street, which would give us a fair field of fire and some accommodation for the men. We occupied this house and informed Battalion Headquarters. The following evening we again received instructions from Commandant Holohan. We were to proceed with all men and equipment to Parnell Square at once. We commandeered a butcher's van, placed most of our arms and equipment in it and sent it ahead of the Company. We dispatched the men in small parties, with orders to report at 44 Parnell Square at once. When we arrived at "44" we found things a bit confused: there had been a few skirmishes with armoured cars and snipers. During an attack on an armoured car in Parnell Street, the driver was wounded or killed and the car crashed into the railings of the Rotunda Hospital. Later the same day a party of our men was attacked by an armoured car in Parnell Street and an ex-Connaught Ranger named Kennedy, who had just joined us, was killed. He was taken into the Laundry of St. Kevin's College, 42 Parnell Square, and his remains were looked after by two members of Cumann na mBan, the Misses O'Dohertys who had charge of the College. The O'Dohertys assisted our men in every way possible.

The same day snipers were active against us and a man of "E" Company, Mick O'Brien, was badly wounded in

the head. Lieutenant Jim Kelly and Paddy Callaghan of "G" Company took a Lewis gun on to the roof of "44" to attack the snipers' post but on firing the first burst the bolt of the Lewis gun blew back due to an explosive round in the pan. The bolt struck Lieutenant Kelly in the thigh; he was taken to Jervis Street Hospital and was detained. After some time there the Free State forces raided the hospital looking for him. On learning of this Lieutenant Kelly made his way back to "44" on a stick. O'Brien had been taken to the Mater Hospital and we called an ambulance and sent Kelly there also. Most of us were now on the look out for the sniper who was still active. I entered the front room upstairs and watched the rooftops. I saw a figure moving from behind a chimney stack on the roof of the Bank at the corner of Parnell Street and Parnell Square (Cavendish Row). I picked up a Mauser rifle which was standing against the wall. I examined it and saw it was loaded. I kept watch on the chimney stack until the man appeared again. He fired and the bullet struck the side of our window. He took cover again. I instructed a couple of the men to watch for his next appearance and when he again exposed himself I fired from the centre of the room and two others from the windows. Sniping was ended from that direction.

The same day Commandant Holohan led a mixed party from the various Companies on a sortie. His object was to reach the Four Courts. They were attacked in Mary Street from a Free State post and a member of "G" Company was fatally wounded. He was Thomas Markey. He died later in Jervis Street Hospital.

Commandant Holohan and his party (approximately 20 men) returned to "44". Later the same evening the Commandant decided to take possession of Jenkin's premises in Capel Street. He led the main body and ordered me to remain behind with fifteen men for about twenty minutes and then follow up through Parnell Street as a rearguard. I waited the prescribed period and then set out with my party. I marched in single line with half my men on each side of the street. When approaching Stafford Street we were attacked by machine-gun fire and two of my men had their hats shot off but were not wounded. I shouted to the men to take cover in the doorways and we returned the fire for about five minutes but we were not quite sure of the enemy's location. After about ten minutes I gave the order to advance, this time making use of what cover we could find and proceeding by short rushes. In this manner we safely reached Ryder's (or Riddles) Row, a short street leading from Parnell Street to Capel Street. At this point there was a terrific explosion and a column of smoke and flame shot several hundred feet into the air. The Four Courts had blown up. The explosion shattered windows all around us and debris of all sorts fell in the street. I halted my party under cover opposite Jenkin's. We had to cross Capel Street under fire from an armoured car and a party of Free State troops stationed near the corner of Mary's Lane and Parnell Street. I sent my men across the street in two's and three's at intervals of from three to five minutes. We got through with one man slightly wounded.

When I entered Jenkin's store I found Commandant Holohan and Vice-Commandant in command. The whole outfit appeared to be disorganised, with the exception of a few

men on guard at the main door. Nobody seemed to bother whether we were attacked or not. There seemed to be disagreement between the senior officers as to what should be done as there was no hope now of assisting the Four Courts garrison. A member of Cumann na mBan who attempted to leave on orders from the Commandant, was shot at and wounded crossing Capel Street. I took one of my men, Section Commander P. Dalton, with me to examine the back of the premises. We found that our position was wide open to attack from the rear. I returned to the shop to report this to the Commandant and was told the Commandant had left with some of the men and Vice-Commandant Irvin was in charge. The Vice-Commandant was making a decision with the Company officers to surrender to the Free State troops. Paddy Dalton and I decided we would find a safe dump for our guns and clear out. We went down to the basement to locate a safe hiding place and found an ideal spot. After dumping his stuff, Dalton ran upstairs again. I remained a few minutes longer stowing away some extra stuff. When I returned upstairs I walked into Commandant J. Slattery, Free State Army, and a party of soldiers who were taking the surrender from Vice-Commandant Irvin. I was taken prisoner with them. Dalton was luckier than I was. He got out by the back as the Free State party entered the front. We were taken to Griffith Barracks, South Circular Road, and locked in the gymnasium, and on the evening of the second day there we were removed by lorry to Mountjoy, where in spite of promises made by Commandant Slattery and our own Vice-Commandant Irvin, we were treated as criminals for several days. Dalton and some members of "G" Company,

who got clear, were afterwards taken prisoners in the "Odd Fellows" Hall, Abbey Street. A couple of months later Vice-Commandant Irvin who was O/C. prisoners in "B" Wing, Mountjoy, with three others, decided to sign the undertaking demanded by the Free State Authorities as a condition for release. They were sent out a couple of days after they signed.

I was elected O/C. prisoners in "B" Wing. I was detained in Mountjoy about fifteen months, after which I was sent to Tintown Camp No. 3. I learned on arrival there that my transfer from Mountjoy was a mistake. I was to be returned to Mountjoy next day but they apparently forgot all about me. When the releases began most of my old comrades went home and I was still forgotten. It was now November 1923, and I decided I would chance walking out with the next release party. I packed my gear and paraded with a party outside the compound next day. We had to enter a control hut outside the compound where a check-up took place. The officer in charge told me I should not be there and ordered me to wait outside. I waited with the remainder till the leader of the release party came out with the rail voucher for the party. As they all moved off I picked up my gear and marched out with them. I was at home several weeks when the C.I.D. were calling at my home to find out how I escaped. They stated there was no record of my release. After several calls to my home for information which was not forthcoming I was again forgotten.

SIGNED

Patrick Kelly
 PATRICK KELLY

DATE

8th Sept 1952

WITNESS

Mr F Ryan Comdt

The night before the "Four Courts" was attacked by Free State forces. I was on parade at 5 Blackhall Street, we received orders from Comdt P. Holohan, to report with all available men at 44 Parnell Square, where the 1st Battⁿ were parading. Some time after reporting there Capt Oman, ordered me to take the men back to Blackhall Street and he would follow later. I was told of the impending attack on the Courts and that we might be attacked on the way so I warned the men what to expect if we met F/S forces. I was instructed not to attack or commit any offensive act unless we were first attacked, we were to wait at BlackhallSt till we received further orders.

On arrival we took possession of the Hall and made preparations for attack. When Capt Oman arrived we sent out scouts to patrol the area and keep us informed of troop movements etc, a member of the Free State forces entered the Hall, he was in uniform but unarmed, He asked numerous questions about what was happening, thinking he might have been sent to ascertain our strength and intentions I ordered his detention. When the Courts was attacked at midnight our scouts came in and reported the position of the attacker and, Capt Oman sent all available information to Comdt Holohan and asked for his instruction. we were told to remain where we were and await further instruction. We waited all next day until nightfall when we received orders to take over any hotel or strong building in our area. The only strong building in the area which offered a fair chance for defence was a private hotel, a corner house in Blackhall Street, which would give us a fair field of fire and some accommodation for the men. we occupied this house and informed Battⁿ 4/12. The following evening we again received instructions from Comdt Holohan, we

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were to proceed with all men and equipment to Parnell square at once. We commandeered a butchers van, placed most of our arms and equipment in it and sent it ahead of the company, we dispatched the men in small parties with orders to report at 44 Parnell square at once. When we arrived at 44 we found things a bit confused, there had been a few skirmishes with Armoured Cars and Snipers. During an attack on an Armoured Car in Parnell Street, the driver was wounded or killed and the car crashed into the railings of the Rotunda Hospital. Later the same day a party of our men was attacked by an Armoured Car in Parnell Street and an ex-Bonnaville Ranger named Kennedy, who had just joined us was killed, he was taken into the laundry of St Kevin's College, 42 Parnell square, and his remains was looked after by two members of Cumann-na-Mbean, the Misses O'Sheridans who had charge of the college. The O'Sheridans assisted our men in every way possible. The same day Snipers were active against us and a man of E Boy Mick O'Brien was badly wounded in the head. Lieut Jim Kelly and Paddy Callaghan of G Boy took a Lewis Gun on to the roof of 44 to attack the snipers post but on firing the first burst the bolt of the Lewis Gun blew back, due to an explosive round in the pan, the bolt struck Lieut Kelly in the thigh, he was taken to Jervis St Hospital and was detained. After some time there, the Free State forces raided the hospital looking for him, on learning of this Lieut Kelly ~~was~~ ^{was} his was back to 44 on a stick O'Brien had been taken to the Mater Hospital and we called an Ambulance and sent Kelly there also. Most of us were now on the look-out for the sniper who was still active, I entered the front room upstairs and watched the rooftops. I seen a figure moving from behind a chimney stack on the roof of the Bank at the corner of Parnell Street and Parnell Square (Cavendish Row) I picked up a Mauser Rifle which was standing against the wall. I examined it and seen

it was loaded. I kept watch on the chimney stack until the man appeared again, he fired and the bullet struck the side of our window, he took cover again. I instructed a couple of the men to ~~wait~~ watch for his next appearance and when he again exposed himself I fired from the centre of the room and two others from the windows, sniping was ended from that direction. The same day Comdt Holohan led a mixed party from the various companies on a sortie, his object was to reach the Four Courts, they were attacked in Mary Street from a Free State post and a member of "E Boy" was fatally wounded, He was Thomas Marley, he died later in Jewin Street Hospital. Comdt Holohan and his party (approx 20 men) returned to HQ. Later the same evening the Comdt decided to take possession of Jenkins premises in Capel Street. He led the main body and ordered me to remain behind with fifteen men for about 20 minutes and then follow up through Parnell Street as a ree-guard. I waited the prescribed period and then set out with my party, I marched in single line with half my men on each side of the street, when approaching Stafford street, we were attacked by machine gun fire and two of my men had their hats shot off but were not wounded. I shouted to the men to take cover in the doorways and we returned the fire for about five minutes but we were not quite sure of the enemy's location. After about ten minutes I gave the order to advance this time making use of what cover we could find and proceeding by short rushes, in this manner we safely reached Ryders (or Riddle) Row, a short street leading from Parnell St to Capel St. at this point there was a terrific explosion and a column of smoke and flame shot several hundred feet into the air, the Four Courts had blown up, the explosion shattered windows all around us and debris of all sorts fell in the street. I halted my party under cover opposite Jenkins's. We had to cross Capel

Street under fire from an Armoured Car and a party of Free State troops stationed near the corner of Marys Lane and Parnell Street. I sent my men across the street in two's and three's at intervals of from three to five minutes, we got through with one man slightly wounded. When I entered Jenkins's store, I found Comdt Houlahan and Vice Comdt in command, the whole outfit appeared to be disorganized, with the exception of a few men on guard at the main door nobody seemed to bother whether we were attacked or not, there seemed to be disagreement between the senior officers as to what should be done as there was no hope now of assisting the Four Courts garrison. A member of Benjamin-na-Moan who attempted to leave ~~in~~ ^{on} orders from the Comdt, was shot at and wounded crossing Capel St. I took one of my men Section Commander P Dalton with me to examine the back of the premises, we found that our position was wide open to attack from the rear, I returned to the shop to report this to the Comdt and was told the Comdt had left with some of the men and Vice Comdt Irwin was in charge. The Vice Comdt was making a decision with the company officers to surrender to the Free State troops. Paddy Dalton and I decided we would find a safe dump for our guns and clear out. we went down to the basement to locate a safe hiding place and, found an ideal spot. after dumping his stuff Dalton ran upstairs again, I remained a few minutes longer stowing away some extra stuff. When I returned upstairs I walked into Comdt J. Slattery, Free State army and a party of Soldiers who were taking the surrender from V Comdt Irwin, I was taken prisoner with them. Dalton was luckier than I was, he got out by the back as the Free State party entered the front

We were taken to Griffith Barracks, S. C. R. and locked in the gymnasium and on the evening of the second day there we were removed by lorry to Mountjoy, where in spite of promises made by Comdt. Flattery and our own Vice Comdt. Irwin we were treated as criminals for several days. Dalton and some members of P. Coy who got clear were afterwards taken prisoners in the "odd fellows" Hall Abbey St. A couple of months later Comdt. Irwin who was C. Prisoner in B Wing, Mountjoy with three others decided to sign the undertaking demanded by the Free State authorities as a condition for release, they were sent out a couple of days after they signed.

I was elected C. Prisoner in B Wing. I was detained in Mountjoy about fifteen months after which I was sent to Lintown Camp 1103. I learned on arrival there that my transfer from Mountjoy was a mistake, I was to be returned to Mountjoy next day but they apparently forgot all about me. When the releases began most of my old comrades went home and I was still forgotten.

It was now November 1923. and I decided I would chance walking out with the next release party. I packed my gear and paraded with a party outside the compound next day. We had to enter a control hut outside the compound where a check-up took place. The Officer in Charge told me I should not be there and ordered me to wait outside. I waited with the remainder till the leader of the release party came out with the Rail Voucher for the party, as they all moved off I picked up my gear and marched out with them. I was at home several weeks

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when the C.I.D. were calling at my home to find out how I escaped, they stated there was no record of my release, after several calls to my home for information which was not forthcoming I was again Forgotten.

P. Kelly

Signature _____

Date _____

Witness _____

