

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21

NO. W.S. 774

ROINN



COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 774

Witness

Garda James Foley,
20 Croagh Patrick Road,
Dublin.

Identity.

Company Commander
"D" Company, 2nd Battalion, Dublin Brigade,
1917-1921;

Member of Garda Síochána, 1952.

Subject.

- (a) Activities of "D" Company, 2nd Battalion,
Dublin Brigade, 1917-1921;
- (b) Burning of Custom House, Dublin,
25th May, 1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. S. 2100

Form B.S.M. 2

ORIGINAL

W. S. 774
BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRS MILITARY 1913-21
No. W.S. 774

STATEMENT BY JAMES FOLEY,

20, Croagh Patrick Road, Dublin.

When D Company 2nd Battalion Dublin Brigade was re-organised after 1916, the membership consisted mostly of persons employed in the licensed trade. Consequently, the parades formation of sections within the Company could only be done on Sunday mornings, in fact for a considerable period the Company paraded only on the Sabbath Day. Subsequent to the re-organisation the Company parades were held at a hall adjacent to All Hallows' College, Clonliffe Road. This place eventually came under notice and alternative accommodation had to be secured. This task was not easily accomplished indoors so it was decided that the Coy should meet in the Phoenix Park on Sunday mornings, under the pretence of a Gaelic football team who were there for practice. The ruse was very successful.

About this period, 1919, the Company took on a more military "appearance" with the formation of special services such as, First Aid classes, Signalling and Musketry, a couple of members being appointed from the Company to attend a Battalion class on the latter subject. The members when proficient would then lecture the Company personnel. A Company Intelligence Officer was functioning about the same time. The collection of arms was engaging the attention of the members, it being the aim of each man to possess his own weapon. An arms fund was opened - the members paid into this fund according to their means. About early 1920 the Company could boast of a fairly well stocked dump. Towards the end of 1920

Company armed parades were taking place, the members devoting their half-holiday to this purpose, and the forenoon on Sunday was availed of for the same purpose. The boundary of the area allotted to D Company was: - starting at the National Bank Parnell St., along Parnell St., north to Ballybough Bridge, along the Royal Canal to Cross Guns Bridge, along Phibsborough Road to Doyle's Corner, the N.C. Rd. via Mater Hospital, Berkeley St., Blessington St., Nth. Frederick St., Parnell Square back to National Bank. For the purpose of armed parades or any Company activities, the Company was restricted to this area. The Company did participate in operations outside this area but it was with Battalion approval.

The strength of the Company at its peak was approximately 140. During the period that all rifles were collected in Dublin and transferred to the country, "D" Company contributed 33. Martin Savage, who was killed at Ashtown, took a prominent part in the re-organisation of "D" Company after 1916, he being one of its first officers.

The most important operation that "D" Company participated in was the destruction of the Custom House - 25th May 1921. The Company co-operated with other Companies on the ground floor of the building. On that occasion 11 members participated - under the command of the 1st and 2nd Lieutenants. I, as O/C of the Company, was in charge of the entire forces operating on the ground floor. The O/C Battalion, Comdt. Tom Ennis, was in command of the members on the top floor. For the purpose of expedition it was considered advisable to divide the Custom House building into two parts, namely the first and second floors.

3.

Each member before he entered the building collected a petrol tin which contained paraffin oil from a lorry which was parked at the entrance opposite Gardiner Street, proceeded to the part of the building allotted to his Company and per order proceeded to collect all files, documents and other official papers and pile them in the centre of the office, saturate them with paraffin and at a pre-arranged signal was to ignite the papers.

The arrangement between the Battalion O/C who was in command of the top floor and myself as officer in charge of the ground floor, was that when he had given the order to set fire to the papers on the top floor he would sound a whistle blast. On hearing this all his men on the top floor would descend to the ground floor. Having satisfied myself that there was nobody left on the top floor I was to issue orders to fire the documents on the ground floor. Had everything worked according to schedule the entire operation would have been completed in fifteen minutes.

We planned to enter the building at 12.58 p.m. This time facilitated us immensely. At that hour the staff should be about to leave for lunch. Had another time been appointed we would have had the additional duty, with the loss of valuable time, of collecting the Civil Servants, their property and conducting them to the main hall. Certain members were instructed to ensure that no employee left until directed to do so. The members of the G.H.Q. Squad were to command the entrance and prevent any unauthorised person from entering or leaving.

The action inside was nearly completed when a tender containing British soldiers passed outside, going in the direction of Store St. The occupants were attacked by members of our protection unit who were stationed outside Liberty Hall. The firing was fierce but not decisive, and it was only a matter of minutes until reinforcements arrived from Dublin Castle. At this stage it was decided to evacuate the Civil Servants. The members inside were not deterred, they continued their work and succeeded in completing the job. It was so successful that it completely disorganised British Civil Administration in the country, and is generally believed to have been in no small way responsible for the subsequent Treaty.

The I.R.A. had their greatest victory since 1916.

Our work on that occasion was not without loss. That day seven brave sons of Ireland paid the supreme sacrifice and upwards of eighty were arrested.

I, as a responsible officer on that occasion, wish to place on record my deep appreciation of the valour of every member who was inside the Custom House that day. The building was burning fiercely; the British forces outside directed a constant stream of lead through every window and door. Our only equipment was small arms and a very limited supply of ammunition, every round of which was spent before the order to evacuate was issued.

The names of the persons from "D" Company who were present were as follows: 1st Lieutenant Arthur Beasley, 2nd Lieutenant Peadar O'Farrell, Volunteers Michael Kelly, John Maloney, John Cullinane, John Mulcahy, Patrick Harold, Patrick Swanzy, Richard McGrath, Daniel Heade

(killed on that occasion), Michael Watchorne. Eight members of the Coy were subsequently arrested and detained in Kilmainham Jail.

The execution of two British Secret Service Agents in the Gresham Hotel, Dublin, was entrusted to "D" Company, although the location of the hotel was not within the Company area. The members who were present were as follows: Capt. Patrick Moran, Adjutant Michael Kilkelly, Section Commanders Arthur Beasley, James Foley, Volunteers Michael Noone, Nicholas Leonard, Joseph Glynn, John Cullinane, William Hogan, Richard McGrath, Morgan Durnin, Joseph Doyle, Patrick Kennedy and George McCann.

The Company was responsible for three ambushes, two on the British military and one on the Auxiliaries. These occurred during 1921, two at Dorset St. and the other at the corner of Nth. Frederick St. and Blessington St. The ambushes were the result of reports received from our Company Intelligence Officers that enemy vehicles were patrolling those particular streets. The actual number of casualties was, of course, never published, but from an eye witness's observation several of the occupants appeared to be seriously wounded. The names of those present with me on one or more of the ambushes were: 1st. Lieutenant Arthur Beasley, 2nd Lieutenant Peadar O'Farrell, Adjutant Michael Kilkelly, Section Commander Patrick Swanzy, Volunteers N. Leonard, James Douglas, Richard McGrath, John McKeon, Patrick Glynn, Joseph Glynn, Patrick Dermody.

Destruction of Raheny R.I.C. Barracks August 1920:

The task allotted to "D" Company was to hold the main road from Dublin to Howth and to prevent enemy or any

other unauthorised persons or vehicles from passing while the actual destruction was in progress. Other members of the Company taking part were: John Cullinane, John Maloney, Morgan Durnin, Michael Kelly and Richard McGrath.

Ambush on Auxiliaries, Eden Quay, April 1921:

The O/C "D" Company was requested by Battalion O/C to do this job although it was outside the Company area. The Auxiliaries travelled in mufti in a private car from the Castle, their destination being the L.M.S. Hotel, North Wall, which they occupied at the time. The Auxiliaries used two different routes, which they alternated. Route one was via Parliament Street, Upper Ormond Quay, Bachelors Walk, O'Connell Bridge. Route two was Dame Street, College Green, Westmoreland Street, O'Connell Bridge. On this occasion they travelled the latter route. On reaching O'Connell Bridge they turned into Eden Quay. The car was attacked by two men at the corner of O'Connell Street and Eden Quay. A second attack was made about 50 yards further down, and a third and final one at the corner of Eden Quay and Marlboro Street. The operation was very successful. I personally saw two occupants of the car (there were four) fall forward and they appeared to me to be critically wounded. Others taking part were: 2nd Lieutenant Peadar O'Farrell, Richard McGrath, Michael Kelly, Patrick Swanzy, Morgan Durnin, James Douglas and 1st Lieutenant Arthur Beasley.

Raid on M.G.W. Railway, Broadstone, May 1921:

The object of this raid was twofold. First to collect bolt cutters, hammers and waste wood, rope ladders etc., most of which were, or might be, required at the destruction of the Custom House. The second object was to chastise two employees who were undesirable from the

national viewpoint. Both were successful. Names:-
O/C James Foley, Volunteers John Cullinane, John Maloney,
Thomas Brabazon, Brian Leavy, Ted McCormack and Nicholas
Leonard.

Attack on Auxiliaries in L.M.S. Hotel, North Wall, April '21:

The L.M.S. Hotel was occupied by Auxiliaries. This post was a great menace to us as it interfered with our railway and marine communications. It was decided, therefore, to liquidate it. The operation was carried out by the 2nd Battalion. Each Company was allotted a particular job. The entire area surrounding the Hotel was "cut off".

My job was to open the Spencer Dock Bridge, throw the key into the river and thereby prevent vehicles with Auxiliary reinforcements crossing. Having done this we proceeded to the rear of the Hotel and attacked it from this point.

Other Companies attacked from the front. Bottles containing paraffin were thrown through the windows, and then another bottle containing liquid fire was thrown in, the intention being to ignite the paraffin. The Auxiliaries were quite unprepared for this attack, believing they were impregnable. The sentries at the main entrances were shot and their rifles taken.

Here again the actual casualties were concealed, but in my opinion they must have been considerable.

The other members of "D" Company taking part were Volunteers John Cullinane, John Maloney and Richard McGrath.

Raid on Auxiliaries on Banba Hall - October 1920:

A section of the Company had taken up a position in Banba Hall. It was our intention to remain there until our Intelligence personnel reported the presence in the Company area of enemy forces. On receipt of such information we would move out and engage them.

Unfortunately our presence there was communicated to the British, and in a short period the building was surrounded. A dance in the ballroom was in progress and was well attended. To offer prolonged resistance would have endangered the safety of many friendly people. It was, therefore, decided to evacuate the hall on the first approach of the British.

This was accomplished under heavy fire, particularly at the rear of the hall where some of our members returned the fire to cover retreat. One of our Company members - Henry Kelly - was fatally wounded and died almost immediately. Those in the building included Richard Hogan, Richard Healy, Henry Kelly, Nicholas Leonard, Michael Kilkelly, Thomas Fitzgerald, Thomas Slater, Arthur Beasley and myself.

Collection of Income Tax, April 1920:

On this occasion "D" Company were responsible for the collection of several hundred pounds from an Income Tax Collector in Glasnevin area. This again was outside the Company area. It was necessary that the party should arrive at the house at 9 a.m. and remain there until the banks closed at 3 p.m. The Collector wrote a cheque made payable to bearer for the amount. The cheque was then cashed by me as the Company O/C. Others taking part with me were 2nd Lieutenant Peadar O'Farrell, Volunteers

John Maloney and John Cullinane.

Drought, Fitzroy Ave. and Doyle - sentenced April 1921 and October 1921:

The above named were considered by G.H.Q. to be undesirables and Drought was sentenced to be chained to the railings of the Ivy Church, North Strand. A printed card was placed on his back which explained why such action had been taken against him. As a further punishment he was deprived of his motor bike and sidecar.

Doyle who resided at N.C. Road, was for a similar reason chained to the railings of the Pro-Cathedral, Marlboro St., on a Sunday morning. He was also the bearer of a card on his back. I cannot now recall why action was taken against these two individuals. Undoubtedly they must have been in some way impeding the national advance at that time. The sentences were carried out by 1st Lieutenant Arthur Beasley, 2nd Lieutenant Peadar O'Farrell and myself.

Patrick Moran was CO of the Company until his arrest in November 1920 I took over then.

Signed:

James Foley
(James Foley)

Date:

28th November 1952
28th November, 1952.

Witness:

J. Kearns Comdt.
(J. Kearns) Comd't.

Members of D Company Battalion 11 on 11.7.1921.

Name.	Address 11.7.1921.	Present Address.
J. Foley	3, Primrose Ave., Fontenoy St.	20, Croaghpatrick Road, Navan Road.
A. Beasley	2, Gaelic St., North Strand.	2, Clonmore Terrace, Ballybough.
P. Farrell	11, Fontenoy Street.	96, Mobhi Road, Glasnevin.
C. Lynch	Upper Dorset Street	Deceased.
J. McKeone	3, Phibsboro Ave., N.C. Road.	65, Slievemore Road, Nth. Crumlin.
J. Corcoran	Upper Dorset Street	
P. Murphy	18, Upper Dorset Row.	18, Upper Dorset Row.
B. Leavy	Sherrard Avenue.	38, Clonliffe Gardens.
T. Brabazon	Upper Dorset Street.	70, Drumcliffe Road, Cabra West.
J. Douglas	Upper Dorset Street.	
N. Leonard	Moylan's, Summerhill.	178, Cabra Road.
T. Dolan	Phibsboro Road.	157, North King St.
W. Toomey	32, Mountjoy Square	Deceased.
T. Dillon	Sherrard Avenue	38, Clonliffe Gardens.
D. Flynn	3, Geraldine Street.	Palmerstown, Co. Dublin.
J. Fox	Glengariffe Parade.	
A. Swan	Belvedere Ave., N.C. Road.	Deceased.
P. McGrath	Northbrooke Ave., Nth. Strand.	Deceased.
J. Clarke	Oval Bar, Abbey Street.	Deceased.
M. Kennedy	Ballybough.	Deceased.
P. Swanzy	3, Mountjoy Square.	Oakley Road, Ranelagh.
S. Bohan	200, Seville Place.	Co. Kildare.
J. Robbins	North Strand.	28, Holly Road, Donnycarney.
O'Brien	Iona Hotel, Gardiner St.	

Members of D Company Battalion 11 on 11.7.1921.Continued.

Name	Address 11.7.1921.	Present Address
T. Hogarty	U.S.A.	Deceased.
Eugene Smyth		
P. Kennedy	Sandyhill, Kilsallaghan, Co. Dublin.	Cavan - Deceased.
J. Higgins	Harold's Cross Road.	Same.
M. Purcell	Mooney's, College St.	
T. Adams	37, Charleville Avenue, North Strand.	Same.
M. Kelly	8, Parkmore Tce., Terenure.	Parkmore Drive. Comdt. Collins Bks. Dublin.
E. Conner	Richmond St., N.C. Road.	Deceased.
J. Darmody		National Army.
P. Donnelly		56, Offaly Road, Cabra.
A. Duggan		
P. Shanahan	Spirit Merchant, Corporation Street.	Deceased.
G. Flanagan	1A Moore Street.	4, Park Tce., Francis St.
E. Reid		
N. Farmer		
A. Harrold		37, Upr. Mount St.
J.F. McMahon	Calphe, Blackrock.	Government Buildings.
P. Glynn		London.
M. Kilkelly	130 Cabra Park.	"Dalriada", Howth.
D. Canny	Lombard Street.	45, Upr. O'Connell St.
J. Cassidy		
P. Tully		Drumnacool, Easkey P.O., Co. Longford.
P. Peters		Custom House Shipping Office, North Wall.

Members of D Company Battalion 11 on 11.7.1921.Continued.

Name	Address 11.7.1921.	Present Address
H. Smith		
J. Kavanagh		
M. Watchorne	Paul St. (off Queen Street)	Blind Asylum?
J. Flannery		
J. Kirwan	49, Parnell St.	49, Parnell St.
L. O'Reilly	17, Cambridge Road, off Rathmines.	20, Charlemont Place.
J. Glynn	Weir's, Burgh Quay.	6, O'Briens Place, Drumcondra.
W. Kehoe	Lynch & O'Briens, Dunlaoghaire.	
J. Farrelly	Spirit Merchant, St. Stephens Green.	Grafton Bar, St. Stephens Green.
P. McKeever	Findlaters, O'Connell St.	Deceased?
L. Fitzsimons	Bacon Shop, Rathmines.	
T. Collins		Deceased.
C. Nolan		Lansdowne Park, Drimnagh Rd., Crumlin.
P. Mitchell	Mooney's, Harry Street.	London.
E. Collins		
J. O'Sullivan	Egan's, Talbot Street.	Deceased.
P. Ruane		
J. Derwin		
T. Heeney		Deceased.
P. Cassells		13, Grantham Street.
M. Burke		2, Chelmoford Road.
J. Mahoney		Deceased.
Hollywood		
R. Holohan	22, Munster St., Phibsboro.	92, Munster St., Phibsboro.
J. Davidson	Shiel's Garage, N.C. Road.	

Members of D Company Battalion 11 on 11.7.1921.Continued.

Name	Address 11.7.1921.	Present Address
J. Martin	21, Munster St., Phibsboro.	Deceased.
J. Cullinane	9 H. Iveagh Buildings Old.	Deceased.
M. Flanagan	36, Blessington Street.	12, Glenarm Ave., Drumcondra.
H. Kelly	22, Sinnott Pl., Dorset St.	Same Address.
J. Donoghue		63, Leix Road, Cabra.
E. McCormack		
A. Myles		
P. Moore		
T. Brack		Unity Hall.
C. Doyle	Corporation Street.	In Army.
T. Slator		38, Offaly Road, Cabra.
R. Healy	Parnell Street.	1, Vincent St., Inchicore
P. Gaffney		50, Parnell Street.
M. Kavanagh		63, St. Mary's Road, Church Road.
M. Noone	Weir's, Burgh Quay.	Deceased.
S. Mulcahy	George's Place.	Whitworth Place, Drumcondra.
M. Durnan	18, Prebena St., Broadstone or	" "
M. Donnellan	Farrell's, Dorset St.	Spirit Merchant, Moore St.
P. Harrold		Croachford, Macroom.
T. Leonard		
D. Carroll	Arranmore Ave., N.C. Rd.	Deceased.
T. Phelan		Deceased.
M. Purcell		Mooney's, Harry St.
S. McGarvey		Deceased.

Members of D Company Battalion 11 on 11.7.1921.Continued.

Name:	Address 11.7.1921.	Present Address
P. McDonald		Deceased.
P. McDonagh		
A. Loughney		London.
A. Redmond		7, Cormack Place.
P. Kilkelly	4, Claremont Villas.	Deceased.
T. Kelly		
C. Kilkelly	4, Claremont Villas.	
J. Havelin	35, Munster Street.	
J. Casey		Deceased.
P. Loughney		U.S.A.
J. Perry		Deceased.
J. Kennedy		Tipperary
T. Corr		
N. Flynn	Spirit Merchant, Moore Street.	159, Oxmantown Road.
J. Plunkett		Deceased.
J. Doyle		London - deceased.
D. Heade		Killed in action Custom House.
H. Kelly		" " " Banba Hall.
L. Sweetman		
P. Bird		Ben Edar Road, Arbour Hill - deceased?
R. McGrath	Irish Press	Northbrook Ave., Nth. Strand.
V. Seerey		U.S.A.
H. Heaney		6, Northumberland Sq., Lr. Abbey St.

Members of D Company Battalion 11 on 11.7.1921.Continued.

Name	Address 11.7.1921.	Present Address
P. Coughlan		
J. Cahill	26, Geraldine St.	
D. Byrne		"C" Div. D.M.P.
J. Heffernan		D.M.P.
J. Grimes		" "
T. Cronin		
J. Clare		
Newman	McDowells, North Wall.	
T. Kelly	Foley St.	Country.
Murphy	Stafford Street.	U.S.A.
Ryan	Mountjoy Square	Army.
Cunningham		Donard.
Con Ryan	Tipperary	Townsend St., Dublin.
G. Mordaunt		Deceased.
Thomas Coffey		Blackrock, Co. Dublin, Provision Merchant.
T. Basdin		230, Clontarf Road.
P. Evers		5, Grantham Pl., off Grantham St.
L. Matterson		35, Bloomfield Ave., S.C. Road.
P. Dunne		45, St. Patrick's Road, Drumcondra.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRS MILITARY 1913-21

NO. W.S.

774