

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURÓ STAIRÉ MILÉATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 1,127

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1,127

Witness

Edward J. Glendon,
30 Gladstone Street,
Clonmel,
Co. Tipperary.

Identity.

Adjutant 'C' Company 8th Battalion
South Tipperary Brigade.

Adjutant 8th Battalion do.

Subject.

'C' Company 8th Battalion South Tipperary
Brigade, 1917 1921

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

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STATEMENT BY MR. EDWARD GLENDON,

30 Gladstone Street, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary.

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Member of No. 1 Flying Column, 3rd Tipperary Brigade.

Adjutant of 8th Battalion, 3rd Tipperary Brigade

Active Service Unit.

I was born on 10th September, 1897, at Breanmore, Nine-Mile-House, Co. Tipperary, where my father was a farmer. I attended the National School at Grangemockler until I was fourteen years of age when, having an inclination to become an African Missionary priest, I went to Ballinfad, Co. Mayo, where the African Missionary Fathers had a school. After twelve months at Ballinfad, I went for another year to Wilton College, Cork, also an African Missionary Fathers' College. At the end of a year in Wilton College, I realised that I had not got a vocation for the priesthood, so I returned to Breanmore and assisted my father on the farm.

When the Rising took place in Dublin in 1916, I did not understand or appreciate its significance, nor did I have any interest in the Sinn Féin or the Irish Volunteer movements. About that time, however, I, with my companion, Pierce Tobin, was in the habit of visiting the home of a Mrs. Browne in Grangemockler. She kept a shop there and she was the widow of my former schoolteacher in Grangemockler. She was a cultured old lady and, from her, Tobin and I learned more about Ireland and Irish history than ever we learned in

school. She lived alone as her five children were then away from home, either in secondary schools or attending the University. Four of those children are still alive and are now: Monsignor David Browne of the Vatican Staff, Rome; Dr. Browne, President of Galway University; Fr. Maurice Browne, P.P., Diocese of Dublin; Mrs. Seán MacEntee, formerly Miss Baby Browne. Seán MacEntee was in the habit of spending his holidays with the Browne's, and Eoin O'Duffy (afterwards Commissioner of the Gárda Síochána) came on holidays at the same time to Grangemockler with Dan Hogan (afterwards Chief of Staff of the Irish Army). When all got together during holiday time in Browne's house, little else except the Rising, the executed leaders and the Volunteer movement was discussed. Both Tobin and I were deeply impressed by all we heard.

I joined the Grangemockler Company of Irish Volunteers at the time of its formation in 1917. The Company was known as C. Company, 8th Battalion, South Tipperary Brigade. Patrick Butler of Nine-Mile-House was appointed Company O/C; and I was appointed Company Adjutant. The strength of the Company was in or about twenty-six men, and we had weekly parades and drill and carried out what was then the usual company routine. With the Company O/C, I attended Battalion Council meetings.

One night in August, 1917, I was present in Carrick-on-Suir when the local Volunteers made an attempt to break up a British recruiting meeting which was being held there. As far as I remember, there was no organisation or any special arrangements made for the breaking up of the meeting - it was just an

impromptu attempt made by some Volunteers who were present and I joined in with them. The meeting was protected by a party of about twenty armed R.I.C. men who opened fire, and some of the Volunteers were wounded.

On Armistice night of 1918, a party of pro Britishers, mostly, I should say, ex British soldiers and British soldiers' wives, attacked the homes of Sinn Féin supporters in Carrick-on-Suir and damaged property by breaking windows. I chanced to be present there again that night and, with some other Volunteers, retaliated by breaking the windows of the pro Britishers' houses. This was also an impromptu affair.

With the exception of those incidents at Carrick-on-Suir, the years 1917, 1918 and 1919 passed quietly so far as Volunteer activity in my area was concerned. The work of organising the Company was, however, pushed ahead and, by April of 1920, the strength of the Company was sixty-two. Early in that year (1920), with some others, I was trained in the use of arms, grenades and military tactics by the late Seán Treacy, then Vice Commandant of the Brigade. This training took place at Rath in Co. Waterford. Around this time too, I took part in various forms of activity such as blocking roads and raiding of mails. On one occasion, I was one of a party who held up a train at Ballinoran near Carrick-on-Suir. The train was searched but nothing or nobody was taken from it. I cannot say what the officers in charge expected to find on the train.

In August of 1920, a general raid for arms was

carried out in the Battalion area on farmhouses, etc., where shotguns were known to be held. Each Company had to carry out the raids in its own area. Generally speaking, there was little difficulty in carrying out these raids as the owners handed over the guns and any ammunition they possessed when we called. I took part in ten or twelve of the raids myself and, in all, our Company secured thirty-five shotguns and a fair share of ammunition as a result of the raids. These thirty-five shotguns were the only arms then held by the Company, and I arranged for their safe custody and care.

We were very keen to get some rifles and, with this object in view, we raised an arms fund, principally by running a few dances. When the fund reached £20, four of us, viz., Patrick Butler (the Company O/C), James Butler, Pierce Tobin and myself, went to the Brigade Headquarters at Rosegreen and purchased four Lee Enfield Service rifles and fifty rounds of .303 ammunition for each rifle from Michael Sheehan, the Brigade Quartermaster, for the £20. This would have been about September or October, 1920. We retained these rifles between us, each one of the four of us keeping a rifle and fifty rounds.

In October, 1920, the four of us, that is, the two Butler's, Pierce Tobin and myself volunteered for the Flying Column which was then being formed under the command of the late Denis Lacey. We were accepted but were told to operate in our own area until we received further orders. In our own area, we made it a practice to snipe about twice a week at Glenbower R.I.C. barracks. This we did just to keep the

garrison's nerves on edge, to draw their fire and to see them sending up Verey light signals for help. From the hill overlooking the Clonmel-Kilkenny road at Glenbower, we occasionally sniped at passing lorries of British forces.

On Bloody Sunday, November 21st, 1920, Michael Hogan, a member of our (Grangemockler) Company, was shot dead while playing football with the Tipperary team in Croke Park, Dublin, by British forces. His remains were brought home to Grangemockler for burial where they arrived on or about November the 23rd. It was decided by his comrades of the Company to accord him military honours at the graveside, and a firing party of six, of which I was one, was appointed to fire three volleys over his grave. The other five members of the firing party were Patrick Butler, James Butler, Pierce Tobin, Thomas Lawrence and Maurice Donovan. The two Butler's, Pierce Tobin and myself were, as already mentioned, in possession of rifles, and two rifles had to be obtained elsewhere for Thomas Lawrence and Maurice Donovan. There was an immense crowd of people at the funeral and, although I believe there was a large party of British forces on the road nearby, they (the British forces) made no effort to enter the cemetery or to interfere with the funeral arrangements. After firing the three volleys, we (the firing party) left by the fields at the back of the cemetery and got away without any incident. Note:- In an article which appeared in the 'Sunday Press' about four months ago, the names and number of men who constituted the firing party at Michael Hogan's funeral were incorrectly given. 7

Shortly after Michael Hogan's funeral, I was called to No. 1 Flying Column. Patrick and James Butler and Pierce Tobin were called to the Column at the same time. Our arrival brought the strength of the Column to sixteen. The late Denis Lacey was Column Commander. At the time of its disbandment in May or June of 1921, the Column had a strength of forty-five.

During my time with the Column, we had some skirmishes and some engagements with enemy forces, the details of which I now find it hard to recall. On one occasion, on the Tipperary-Aherlow road, generally known as the Coach road, we ambushed a party of British troops who, with horse-drawn vehicles, were bringing stores and provisions from Tipperary military barracks to an outpost in the Glen of Aherlow. I know that the Column suffered no casualties on that occasion, and I regret that I cannot now recall what the British casualties were like. I am sure that some of the surviving members of the Column from the 4th Battalion area will be able to give full details of this engagement.

Our principal engagement with the enemy took place in April, 1921, at and near Garrymore Cross on the main road between Cahir and Clogheen. Here we prepared and occupied an ambush position for a party of British troops bringing stores and provisions by horse vehicles from Cahir to their outpost in Clogheen. Just before the troops entered the ambush position, one member of the Column fired a shot too soon, with the result that the troops dismounted from the wagons and took cover. We then fired at the horses and, for half an hour or so, we exchanged shots

with the soldiers who were all the time under cover.

The Column Commander, realising that we were getting nowhere and expecting that reinforcements for the British troops might arrive at any moment, decided to withdraw the Column, so we moved away along a bye-road which, at this point, joins the Cahir-Clogheen and the Clonmel-Cloheen roads. This bye-road is about half a mile long. When we were within about one hundred and fifty or two hundred yards of the Clonmel-Clogheen road, a shot was fired, presumably at us, by one of a large party of British troops who were on the Clonmel-Clogheen road. We took cover in the best position we could and exchanged fire with the troops for some time. As our position was far from secure, the Column Commander decided to leave a small party to keep the troops engaged while the main body of the ~~Column~~^{Column} withdrew to a point where it was possible to cross the road (i.e., the Clonmel-Clogheen road) and to take up a position on the opposite side and at the rere of the British forces. When this movement was completed, we again opened fire and the engagement lasted most of the afternoon until the British troops withdrew. The Column was at full strength, about forty strong, and suffered no casualties. I cannot say what was the strength of the British forces, nor can I say what casualties they suffered.

This engagement took place in April, 1921, and it was on this same day that District Inspector Potter of the R.I.C. was captured by the Column. Just before the firing at the horse-drawn vehicles started, he drove alone in his motor car into the ambush position. He was stopped and taken into a field.

He was in civilian clothes and we did not recognise him. A search of his pockets disclosed his identity, so he was held prisoner. When the engagement was over, we dare not release him for fear he might subsequently identify any of the members of the Column, so we had no option but to take him with us.

We were anxious to get as far away as possible from Garrymore Cross that evening and night, so, bringing Potter with us, we marched to the village of the Nire in the Comeragh Mountains where the Column got refreshments. That night, from the Nire, we crossed the Comeraghs to Rathgormack. In all, we marched a distance of about forty miles from the scene of the engagement until we went into billets next day at Rathgormack; and it was all cross-country.

During the week or ten days Potter was with us, he was detained in various houses in three different Company areas. We always moved him by night. On one particularly dark night while on the march, he managed to slip away from his escort. When he was missed, the whole Column extended out to search for him. He was located within about ten minutes or so of his disappearance, hiding in a bunch of bushes. Had he kept going instead of hiding in the bushes, he might possibly have escaped, for the night was very dark.

The Brigade Staff made an offer to the British authorities that Potter would be released unharmed, provided that they (the British authorities) in turn reprieved a Volunteer named Thomas Traynor who was then under sentence of death in Mountjoy Prison. Potter was aware of this, and he was very optimistic that the British authorities would consider his life-time of

loyal service and reprieve Thomas Traynor to secure his own release. However, he was disappointed, for Thomas Traynor was hanged in Mountjoy and, as the British were informed that, in the event of Traynor's execution, Potter would be executed as a reprisal, there was now no hope for him. He was rather a jolly, decent type of man and, despite his attempt to escape, we had become quite friendly with him during the time he was a prisoner in our hands. When told that he would be executed, he took it well and showed no signs of bitterness towards his captors. In fact, any complaint he had to make was against his own authorities for their refusal to exchange his life for that of Thomas Traynor. He was executed, by shooting, in a field near Rathgormack on a Sunday night. The execution was carried out under the supervision of the Column Commander. I was not one of the firing party, but I had been one of his guards that day; and, actually, when the time came for his execution, we felt rather sorry for him.

About this time too, the Column took up a position near Cola railway station. Here we were joined by two other Columns, the No. 2 Tipperary Column and the East Limerick Column. I understand that the intention was to ambush a troop train on its way to Cork. After waiting there all day, no troop train arrived; so the Columns parted, each returning to its own area.

Towards the end of May or Early June of 1921,

the Column was disbanded and the members were instructed to return to their Battalion areas and form Active Service Units in their own areas. With the twelve other members of the 8th Battalion who were members of the Column, I returned to the 8th Battalion area and formed the 8th Battalion Active Service Unit. Pierce Tobin was appointed O/C of the Active Service Unit, and I was appointed Adjutant. We soon recruited a number of men of the 8th Battalion, who were on the run, into the Active Service Unit, and its strength was eventually twenty-eight.

It is difficult now, after so many years have elapsed, to recall the various activities of the Active Service Unit from the time of its formation until the Truce in July, 1921. We did occupy ambush positions, but nothing happened owing to the failure of the enemy forces to turn up. On one occasion, we went into Carrick-on-Suir and searched the town for enemy forces but again without result. Later, we learned that on that particular night the enemy forces were confined to barracks.

For some time after the Truce was signed, it was considered unsafe for the men who had been members of the Columns to return to their homes; so we remained on the run. About a month or two after the Truce, the Active Service Unit went into camp and, at the same time, with the Battalion

officers, I visited the various Companies, assisted in the reorganisation of the Companies and instructed them in the use of arms, etc.

SIGNED: Edward J. Glendon
(Edward J. Glendon)

DATE: 18th March 1955

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BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21
NO. W.S. 1127

WITNESS: J. Grace
(J. Grace)