

W.S. 1,264
ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21
NO. W.S. 1264

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1,264.....

Witness

Bernard Sweeney,
High Street,
Ballinamore,
Co. Leitrim.

Identity:

Q.M. Second Battalion
South Leitrim Brigade, I.R.A.
Member of South Leitrim Active Service Unit.

Subject.

Raid for arms
near Ballinamore, Co. Leitrim,
April 1919.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. 8.2506.....

Form B.S.M. 2

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21 S. 1 264
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SUPPLEMENTARY STATEMENT BY Mr. BERNARD SWEENEY,
High Street, Ballinamore, County Leitrim.

In my original statement I forgot to mention about the arrest of four of our men and the events that followed their arrest. This incident took place in early 1919 during the general raid for arms carried out by the I.R.A. at that time. Although the matter is not one of primary importance I would like to have it included in my statement in order to prove that the Volunteers or I.R.A. were a well organised body of men in South Leitrim at that period, and were capable of concentrated action.

During the general raid for arms in April, 1919, four of our men went to raid the house of a Protestant resident not far outside Ballinamore on the Mohill Road who had a good shotgun. They were met at the house by the owner, Mr. Johnston of Adeeren. They told Mr. Johnston the object of their visit and he informed them that he had not the gun in the house at the time and suggested to them that they should call back in an hour when he would have the weapon for them. They agreed to this and departed. They returned in an hour but now found four R.I.C. awaiting them who were concealed in an outhouse. Our men were placed under arrest and taken to the R.I.C. barracks in Ballinamore. Fortunately they were carrying no arms of any kind or documents when arrested.

They were kept in Ballinamore Barracks for about twenty-four hours and the police then took them to the railway station with the intention of taking them to Sligo gaol. Rail was the normal means of travelling for the R.I.C. at this time. When the prisoners were

put on the train the driver, John Gaffney, refused to move the train while the police and prisoners were on it. The police were obliged to take their prisoners back to the barracks.

We estimated that they would now try to move them by road and we mobilised all available men of the 2nd Battalion that night and blocked all the roads leading into the town by felling trees and building loose stone walls and so forth across them. The following day the Police tried to move their prisoners by road but could not get through our road blocks and had again to take the prisoners back to barracks.

The following day the police assisted by Military working from the outside of the ring of blocks cleared the road and took the prisoners to Sligo gaol. They were interned until after the Treaty was signed. Gaffney, the train driver, was also arrested shortly after the incident at the railway station and was also interned. No shooting that I am aware of took place at any time during the course of these incidents. No action was taken against Mr. Johnston. We had not got 'tough' at that time.

Signed: B. Sweeney
(B. Sweeney)

Date: 6 Oct 1955

6th Oct. 1955.

Witness: Matthew Barry Comd't
(Matthew Barry) Comd't.

