

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 1,359

ROINN



COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1,359

Witness

Edward Curran,
Windgap,
Dungarvan,
Co. Waterford.

Identity.

Member of Brickey Company,
West Waterford I.R.A. 1919 - .

Subject.

Brickey Company I.R.A.
West Waterford, 1919-1923.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

N11

File No. S. 2679

Form B.S.M. 2

W. S. 1,359

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 1,359

W. S. 1,359

STATEMENT BY EDWARD CURRAN,

Windgap, Dungarvan, County Waterford.

I was born in Glenmore, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford. My parents were farmers. From my early years my four brothers and I were members of the G.A.A. in West Waterford, and about the end of the year 1919 I joined the Brickey Company, Irish Volunteers. When I joined up, the Company Captain was Paddy Moloney. Tommy Dee was 1st Lieutenant and Mick Foley, 2nd Lt. The strength of the company then was about thirty men. There were from ten to fifteen shotguns and about two revolvers in the company and up to four hundred rounds of ammunition.

We drilled and trained by night in the fields and made buckshot from lead cut into small strips and rolled into pellets. We put about four or five of these pellets into each cartridge. We found they were more effective than shot. This sort of work was done mostly in the house of a man named Morrissey of Ballymacmague, a few miles east of Glenmore, and also in a house known as "The Watties" at the top of Glenbeg which is across the river from Glenmore.

I took part in night raids for guns on farms in the neighbourhood. About four of us as a rule carried out these raids. We were armed with shotguns and, occasionally, with revolvers. In no case was any opposition met. Amongst those houses raided were Flynn's of Coolnagower, Delaney's of Glenbeg and Power's of Glenmore.

On the night of the big ambush at Piltown Cross, Co. Waterford, which was carried out by men of the West Waterford Brigade under George Lennon, the Flying Column O/C, I was on scout duty at Kiely's Cross which is situated about five miles north east of the ambush position. I was armed with a shotgun. There were men from all the West Waterford Companies on scout duty that night to make sure that our lads at Piltown would not be surprised by British forces. The ambush was a great success. A lorry of enemy troops from Youghal were compelled to surrender with all their arms and equipment. I believe that two of their number were killed and about six wounded. When the ambush was over we were ordered to disperse to our homes, which we did without meeting any enemy troops.

In February, 1921, a company of I.R.A. was formed in Glenbeg. My brother, James Curran, was Company Captain. James Wing of Killosera was 1st Lt., and Thomas Hickey of Windgap, 2nd Lt. There were about twenty-five men in the company, about half of whom were armed with shotguns. I was a member too. I think we had three revolvers and two Service rifles also. The two rifles were bought from a British Army officer named Captain Mitchell, who had brought them home from Ceylon. They were purchased for £7.

The company was often engaged at night during the latter end of 1920 and in 1921 cutting trenches in roads to hamper the movements of British forces. We cut a trench in The Sweep Road, which is $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Dungarvan on the main Dungarvan-Youghal road, and on the Dungarvan-Clashmore road we knocked down Ballyguiry Bridge. All the company men used be engaged on this type of work.

On the night of The Burgery, Dungarvan, ambush, which took place on 18th March, 1921, our job was to destroy Finnish Bridge, which is about six miles to the west of The Burgery on the main Dungarvan-Cappoquin road. We did this and so prevented any of the enemy from approaching The Burgery from Cappoquin.

The West Waterford Column operated in our area many a time during this period - early 1921. They often came in to billets in our district, and when they came we mounted armed guard at night as well as arranging the billeting for them. There were about a dozen to fifteen men on the column so far as I can remember. One night when we were on guard over the column an aeroplane flew low over the billets. We fired on the plane but she did not return the fire.

On May 7th, 1921, I was at home at Glenmore when word was received that three lorries of Tans had gone raiding at Old Parish, Dungarvan, which is eight miles to the south of Glenmore. It was a Sunday morning. Four of us were together, including my brother Jimmy, the Company Captain, and we decided to have a crack at the Tans on their way back to Dungarvan. We were armed with two rifles and two shotguns. We were not in the desired position to attack when, about midday, the three lorries approached us. We took up positions hurriedly behind a hedge at a boreen and opened fire on the last of the three lorries. The lorries all stopped. The Tans got out and engaged us. We continued to fire several volleys into them, but then some civilians came into our line of fire and we had to break off the fight for fear of hitting these civilians. As a matter of fact, a man from the locality named Pierce Walsh was wounded

The enemy forces had spread out to carry on the attack, and, due to their great superiority over us both in numbers and weapons, we had no option but to retreat. We pulled back in a westerly direction towards our own district - Glenmore. We suffered no casualties from the enemy fire, but one of our party was injured jumping off a ditch during our retreat. We had to carry him for a long distance subsequently, as he was unable to walk and would very likely have been captured by the Tans.

In May, 1921, with six others I took part in a train hold-up at Cappagh, Co. Waterford. Six of us, all armed, stopped the train in broad daylight. One of our lads jumped into the driver's cabin and held up the driver while the rest of us took off the mail-bags. We examined the mails for letters addressed to military or R.I.C. personnel and their associates, and when we were finished our examination we put back what letters we didn't want into the bags and hung the latter up on a tree near Cappagh where they could be seen. So far as I can remember, I believe that as a result of this raid information which led to the execution of a spy was obtained, but I am unable to give any further particulars regarding this.

Near the end of June, 1921, I, with some others of our company, was getting ready all night for an ambush on a troop train at Cappagh station. The attack was timed for about 8 a.m. and there was up to twenty of our lads in position at that time. The gates at the level crossing near the station were closed so that the train, which was coming west from Cork, would pull up at Cappagh.

When the train was approaching the station our lads opened fire with rifles and shotguns. The train did not stop but dashed through the level crossing gates and went on out of range towards Dungarvan, Co. Waterford. One of our lads was accidentally shot, but not fatally, and I removed him from the scene of the ambush that morning. I do not know whether we inflicted any casualties on the enemy troops in that train ambush.

Other activities in which I took part pre Truce were the cutting of telegraph wires between Dungarvan and Youghal and the construction of dumps for arms. One of the latter I made in a fence with a roof of sheet iron covered in with stones.

During the Truce period I attended a training course held at Kilgobnet, Co. Waterford. I was attached to the Medical Corps under Dr. McCarthy.

Before the Civil War broke out in 1922 I was one of the I.R.A. party occupying Dungarvan barracks, and when the Civil War started I fought on the anti-treaty side at the siege of Waterford and was appointed Company Captain when my brother was arrested in September, 1922. I took part in four attacks on Free State troops in Dungarvan from September, 1922, to March, 1923, and was wounded in the left knee in one of these engagements. I also took part in engagements at Killongford and Glenbeigh and was one of those who rescued Bill Lennon - lying wounded and a prisoner, from the County Home, Dungarvan in March, 1923.

At the cease-fire all the battalion arms were left with me. I put the guns into barrels of candle grease, which were wahsed ashore from wrecks, for safe keeping.

Witness:

Ed Curran

Signed:

Ed Curran