

W.S. 1,372

ORIGINAL

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| BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21 |
| BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21 |
| No. W.S. 1,372 |

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.
 STATEMENT BY WITNESS.
 DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1,372

Witness

Patrick Cash,
 Moneygall,
 Co. Tipperary.

Identity.

Vice-Commandant 5th Battalion
 No. 1 Tipperary Brigade.

Subject.

Templederry Company Irish Volunteers,
 Co. Tipperary, 1917-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. S.2685

Form B.S.M. 2

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STATEMENT BY PATRICK CASH

Moneygall, Roscrea, Co. Tipperary.

formerly Vice-Commandant, 5th Battalion,
Tipperary Brigade.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-5
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North

I was born on 14th June 1892 in Cloughinch, Templederry, Co. Tipperary. I went to Templederry National School until I reached the sixth standard and then went to work as a farm labourer, and later as an operator of agricultural machinery which my father hired out to farmers in the locality.

I first became connected with the Irish Volunteer movement about November 1917, when a company was started one night in the band room in Templederry by Liam Hoolan, Nenagh, afterwards Commandant, North Tipperary Brigade. Fifteen or sixteen men were enrolled on that occasion and the following officers were elected:- Captain, Michael Hogan; 1st Lieut. Tom Collins; 2nd Lieut. myself; Company adjutant, Michael Meehan.

The Templederry Company from its inception met for drill on one night during the week and usually held a parade every Sunday. Michael Hogan, company captain, acted as drill instructor and he, in turn, was instructed in this work by a man called McLaughlin, who was sent into the area by G.H.Q. in Dublin.

As the conscription threat developed during the spring of 1918, our company grew in strength until it reached about 100. As soon, however, as it became apparent that the British Government did not intend to enforce conscription in Ireland, the membership showed a sharp decline and, by the end of 1918, the number on the rolls fell as low as twenty five, all of whom remained in the ranks until the Truce in 1921.

For the purpose of meeting the threat of conscription

each member of the Templederry Company, on orders from headquarters, got a pike made for himself. The pikeheads were forged by James Burke, Greenane, Templederry, a farrier by trade and also a member of the company. These pikes were never used for military purposes.

About the same time as the Irish Volunteers were started a Sinn Fein Club was also formed in Templederry. I was a member of the committee, the chairman and secretary being, respectively, Jeremiah Burke and Michael Kelly. The club meetings were held fairly frequently although usually not much business had to be discussed. My outstanding recollection of this body refers to an incident which occurred in November 1918. I was given, to post, some handbills dealing with the general election which was then approaching. I pasted some of them on a notice board outside the local Catholic Church on a Sunday morning and then stood beside the board to ensure that they would not be torn down. The R.I.C. sergeant in Templederry, known to us as Johnny Igoe, came along with another peeler and went to pull down the posters. I at once intervened, whereupon the police took my name and address. Later that day my home was searched by the police, apparently for Sinn Fein literature, and they also searched the house of Jeremiah Burke, the chairman of the Club. Sergeant Igoe found some papers in Burke's, but they were snatched out of his hand by Mrs. Burke and burned in the kitchen fire.

A fortnight after the police raids I was arrested and tried before a special court in Templemore on a charge of assaulting the police. I was sentenced to one month's imprisonment which I served in Limerick Jail.

On my release from jail I immediately resumed my

connection with the Irish Volunteers, having by that time been appointed 1st Lieutenant of the Templederry Company. My promotion arose because the man who held the rank resigned. He was married and felt the post should be filled by someone who was free from marital encumbrances.

During 1918 - I can't give the month in which it occurred - the northern part of Co. Tipperary was formed into a brigade area known as No. 1 Tipperary Brigade. It consisted of seven battalions and the parish of Templederry became portion of the 5th Battalion. The battalion officers appointed at the time were: Commandant, Michael Hogan; Vice-Commandant, Patrick Doherty; Adjutant, William Hanly; Quartermaster, Tom Carey.

Michael Hogan had been captain of the Templederry Company and I succeeded him as captain on his promotion to the rank of battalion commandant. Samuel O'Brien replaced me as 1st Lieutenant in my company.

The 5th Battalion comprised five companies as follows:-

- A. Company - Templederry
- B. Company - Killeen - Captain - Ned Ryan
- C. Company - Greenane - Captain - Paddy Kennedy
- D. Company - Reiska - Captain - John Caples
- E. Company - Curreeney - Captain - Paddy Ryan (Hill)

Through time, Hogan vacated the post as commandant of the 5th Battalion and was followed by Paddy Doherty, the vice-commandant, while I replaced Doherty as vice-commandant. About April 1921, Doherty was removed and John Caples, Captain of Reiska Company, succeeded him as battalion commandant. That was the last change in the personnel of the officers of the 5th Battalion until the Truce.

The first guns acquired by the Volunteers in our area were shotguns obtained from our own sympathisers. I got a

.45 Webley (long) revolver about the end of 1918 for which I paid £3 to Jim Murphy of Nenagh, who bought it from a British soldier home on leave. We also raided the houses of loyalists during 1919 for arms and from such raids secured one .45 short Webley and half a dozen shotguns, with several dozen rounds of shotgun cartridges. By the end of 1919, the Templederry Company possessed about ten shotguns and two Webley r evolvers.

The first occasion in which I was involved in an attempt to attack British troops was in February or March 1920. At that time five or six policemen frequently escorted the postman taking mails from Letteragh to Templederry. It was decided to attack them at Oatfield. About a dozen men from different companies in the 5th Battalion took up positions in that townland under my control. On the day in question the police did not put in an appearance and the operation was then abandoned.

On 3rd April 1920, with Sam O'Brien, 1st Lieutenant of the Templederry Company I went to Nenagh where we reported to Sean Gaynor of the brigade staff. We were joined by a number of men belonging to the Nenagh Company. About five or six of us were detailed to force an entrance into the office of the local income tax collector, while the remainder of the party were placed on protective duty on the street outside. Entrance was forced without difficulty. All the papers in the office were collected and removed to the creamery yard near by and there burned. The operation passed off without incurring the attention of the police and each man involved then went off home.

On 7th or 8th April 1920, I was a member of a party of about a dozen men who attacked a cycle patrol of three policemen going from Rearcross to Newport at Lackamore Wood. The

three or four others from Mid-Tipperary Brigade, were asked to help us. I can remember the names of the following who took part:- Paddy Duggan, Carnahalla; Paddy Hughes Curreeney; Jim Hayes, Reiska; .. Madden, Newport; Jim Stapleton, Mid-Tipperary Brigade; Jerry Ryan and Mick Small, Mid-Tipperary Brigade.

The I.R.A. party was equipped with rifles, revolvers and shotguns and took up positions at about 9 o'clock in the morning, all the men being placed on the same side of the road - the right hand side going from Rearcross to Newport. After an hour's waiting, the police came along cycling, the first two abreast and one man a few yards in the rear. Each policeman carried a service Webley revolver. As they came into the ambush position fire was opened by us and two of the police were killed outright, while the third man, though wounded, threw himself over the fence on the side of the road opposite to us and made his way in safety back to his barracks in Rearcross, about three miles away. The revolvers and ammunition carried by the dead policemen were collected by us and we then dispersed to our home areas.

We had assembled that morning at Knockfune Creamery, where I had left my bike, and then walked across the country to Lackamore Wood. After the ambush I had to collect my bike and cycle back to the Templederry district, and like all the rest of the men who took part in ambush, I made the journey home without being intercepted by the police or military.

On 11th July 1920, I received word to report for an attack on Rearcross R.I.C. Barracks. This barracks was garrisoned by about 20 policemen and was fortified by steel shutters in the windows and heavy barbed wire entanglements. It was a two-storied building and a number of loopholes were

cut through the walls in the upper storey. On the right hand side the barracks was adjoined by another two storied building, a grocery and publichouse owned by a family named Flannery. It appears that this attack had been arranged between certain officers of the North Tipperary Brigade and the officers of the Mid and South Tipperary Brigade outside the knowledge of the commandant of the North Tipperary Brigade, in whose area the attack was to take place, and that, as a result of this, the roads in the Newport area were not blocked or barricaded by the Volunteers there on the night of 11th July. Because of this, the attack was postponed until the following night which was Sunday. With the Newport roads open, the enemy stationed in Nenagh and Newport could quickly come to the relief of the police in Rearcross.

On Sunday, 12th July, Jack Hogan, Sam O'Brien and myself went on to The Rocks of Rea as ordered. I had a shotgun and revolver, while the other two carried revolvers. At the "Rocks" there was a big assembly of armed I.R.A. men from all over Co. Tipperary, including Dan Breen, Sean Treacy and Paddy Ryan (Lacken); Ernie O'Malley, G.H.Q. organiser in Tipperary appeared to be in charge. He divided the men into sections and I was one of about a dozen who were selected to occupy Flannery's house, next door to the barracks.

We entered Flannery's about 11 o'clock that night. Myself and a Volunteer named Jim Hayes were posted in a store on the ground floor. One of the walls of this store formed part of the dividing wall between Flannery's and the police barracks and our job was to prevent the police from breaking into Flannery's through this store room. Among the others who entered Flannery's was O'Malley himself, Paddy Kinnane, Upperchurch, and Jim Gorman, Hollyford. The latter was the

man who broke through the roof of Flannery's and got on to the roof of the barracks, through which an attempt was made to set fire to the barracks. As Gorman began working on the roof, fire was opened on the barracks by sections in other positions. The attack went on throughout the night, but the police were still defiant.

After daybreak an attempt was made to set fire to a lean-to building which formed part of the rear of the barracks. I was called upon by O'Malley to assist himself and Paddy Kinnane in throwing lighted sods of turf on to the roof of this lean-to. While so engaged O'Malley was wounded through the right shoulder and he had to be helped into Flannery's by Kinnane who ordered me to return to my original post. O'Malley received first aid treatment and as soon as he was bandaged the attack was called off.

In moving off from Rearcross, we went in extended formation in the direction of Kilcommon beyond which the attackers were dispersed to their home districts.

Some time later I was selected with Jack Hogan and Tom Spillane from the Templederry Company to form a party of about a dozen men to bring off an attack on R.I.C. who were known to be frequenting Carey's publichouse in Silvermines about 200 yards from the police barracks in that village. Each of the men who went from Templederry carried a shotgun and we had two revolvers also with us. The rest of the party were armed with rifles, revolvers and shotguns. This attack took place on 12th September 1920. At Lahid, a quarter of a mile from Templederry, the party was divided into two groups. The group to which I was allocated comprised five men and we took up a position at the back entrance to Carey's 'pub'. The other group had a position between Carey's and the barracks.

About 9 o'clock at night, just after nightfall, two policemen who were in Carey's left the premises by the front door and proceeded direct to the barracks. They were fired on as they passed the I.R.A. group lying in wait up the street and one of the police was wounded, but the two of them got into the barracks. There was no other policeman about the village, and the attacking party retired.

On 27th December 1920, I was with Paddy Doherty, then O/C. 5th Battalion, in Meehan's house in Knocknagoriff, Templederry, when Doherty discharged a shot accidentally from his parabellum revolver that wounded me in the right arm and right thigh. These wounds put me on the sick list for five or six weeks, the wound in the thigh being very troublesome through having gone septic for want of proper attention. However, on being treated by Dr. Williams, Toomevara, I became well again about the middle of February 1921.

In April 1920, a training camp for company and battalion officers in the Tipperary No. 1 Brigade was set up in Glanculloo shooting lodge at the foot of the Keeper Hill. The training officer was Captain McCormack from G.H.Q., Dublin who later became O/C. 3rd Southern Division. The camp continued for one week and dealt mostly with rifle instruction and the manufacture of bombs. The food was supplied to the camp by the local farmers and was prepared by ourselves. A short while afterwards, another training camp on the same lines was held at Barbaha, Ballywilliam. I also attended this camp.

From April 1921 onwards, our Brigade had an active service unit of about 20 men under Jack Collison. Each man was equipped with a rifle. We did not see much of this unit in our area until June 1921, when it came to the Templederry

district to attack a police patrol of about eight men which travelled at irregular intervals on the Templederry-Letteragh road. For this operation the A.S.U. was reinforced by a dozen men from the local company armed with shotguns and revolvers. As the police did not show up after a few days the A.S.U., which took up quarters in Castleotway Lodge, left the district. That was the last occasion prior to the Truce that I was involved in any attempt at engaging British forces.

Signed: Patrick Cash

(Patrick Cash)
Date: 12-3-1956

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Witness: D. Griffin

(D. Griffin)

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