

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 1577

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1577

Witness

William Linehan,
Glashaboy,
Carrignavar,
Co. Cork.

Identity.

Captain, Carrignavar Company,
Irish Volunteers.

Subject.

Activities of Carrignavar Company,
Irish Volunteers, Co. Cork, 1916-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil.

File No S. 2896.

Form B.S.M. 2

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STATEMENT BY WILLIAM LINEHAN

Glashaboy, Carrignavar, Co. Cork.

I was born in the townland of Glashaboy in the parish of Carrignavar on 1st May 1898. I attended the local National School until I was 15 years of age. After leaving school I took up farming on my father's farm.

Some months after the Rebellion in 1916, a company of Volunteers was formed in Carrignavar. About 50 young men joined the company in the first few weeks after its formation. Frank Dunne was appointed captain, Dan Hassett, 1st Lieutenant and Jerry Murphy, 2nd Lieutenant. We drilled twice a week, carried out field exercises and route marches.

On St. Patrick's Day 1917, we went into Cork City for a St. Patrick's Day parade which was attended by companies of Volunteers from the city and other parts of Cork.

At the latter end of 1917, there was an election for new officers for the company. I was elected captain, Tim Murphy, 1st Lieutenant and John Coleman, 2nd Lieutenant.

At the conscription crisis in 1918, we received into the company about 70 new members, which brought our strength up to 130 men. The company area was very large and extended from Glashaboy in the north to Dunbullah in the south. Several shotguns were collected during this period and were used in drilling and on route marches. After the crisis about 60 of the new recruits left the company which reduced our strength to 70 men. At the end of the year, we were all engaged in canvassing for the Sinn Féin candidate prior to the general election. Throughout the year 1919 our activities were confined to routine drilling.

Early in 1920, a Court was set up in the Carrignavar area. Ned Kent was appointed President. He was assisted by William

Spillane and Mick Forde. Dinny Leahy was appointed Clerk of the Court. The Volunteers acted as a police force and carried out all decrees issued.

Some time in May or June, the R.I.C. Barracks in Carrignavar was evacuated. Shortly after, I received an order from Brigade H.Q. in Cork to burn down the building. With the assistance of a number of Volunteers, I carried out the order. Some time previously, I sought permission from the brigade staff to carry out an attack on this barracks, but they would not approve of the proposal. It appears that their reason for refusing permission to attack was due to the fact that they had decided to use our company area and adjoining company areas as a place of refuge or retreat for members of the active service units operating in the city and county.

Soon after the burning of the barracks in Carrignavar and another evacuated barracks in Glanmire together with a Courthouse in the Riverstown Company area, this area was organised into a battalion. The battalion comprised four companies. They were: Carrignavar, Whitechurch, Tubber^Nmire and Riverstown. James Harte was appointed Battalion O/C., John Barry, vice O/C., William Hickey, adjutant, and Joseph Cashman, Q.M.

A short time later, James Harte got married and ceased to act as Battalion O/C. Christopher O'Gorman was appointed O/C. in his place. With the exception of Joseph Cashman, all of these men are now dead.

Around the latter end of June or early in July, a couple of lorry loads of military and R.I.C. passed through Bohard in our company area on their way to Cork city on several evenings in succession. With the permission of the battalion staff, I mobilised about 30 members of the company and took up ambush positions one night on each side of the road at

Bohard to carry out an attack on the lorries. We were armed with shotguns except for two men who had rifles. In addition to the shotguns, a couple of our men also carried revolvers. We waited from 10 p.m. to 3 a.m. but the lorries never came along, so we returned to our homes.

A short time later, Edward Heagerty, captain of Riverstown Company, decided to attack a military lorry which travelled once a week from Fermoy to Cork city. This lorry as a rule passed through Glanmire around 3 p.m. on a certain day. Heagerty discussed the proposed attack with me and asked me to help. I agreed and brought a few of my men along for the ambush. The attacking party numbered 20 men and, except for myself and the two or three other members of the Carrignavar Company, were all members of the Riverstown Company including Joseph Cashman, the Battalion Q.M.

The attack was planned for a place named Bleach Hill on the Fermoy side of Glanmire. In preparation for the attack, Joseph Cashman and a couple of local Volunteers had spent the early morning cutting through the trunk of a large tree which they intended by the use of ropes to pull across the road as the lorry approached. Around 2 p.m. the attacking party took up positions on high ground on one side of the road. Six of our men had rifles; the rest had shotguns. The rifles had been borrowed from one of the city battalions.

About an hour after taking up positions, a signal was received that the military lorry was approaching. Three or four Volunteers whose job it was to pull the tree across the road made frantic efforts to do so, but the tree held fast and could not be moved. It had not been sawn through enough. They took cover and waited. As the lorry came into the ambushade every man opened fire at once. The lorry continued on its way while the military inside returned our fire.

As it went on its way we hurriedly left our positions and returned home. We later heard that several of the military had been wounded.

After this, activities in our company area and, for that matter, in the battalion area were very few up to the Truce. A couple of spies were, however, located in the battalion area. They were subsequently arrested, tried by courtmartial and executed. The area sheltered many well-known members of the brigade flying columns of the city and county during the period.

During the Truce I spent a fortnight in a training camp at Gougane Barra.

Signed: William Linehan

Date: 13th February, 1957

Witness: John J. Doherty

