

ROINN  COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 477.....

Witness

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Identity

Member of 'C' Company
3rd Battalion Dublin Brigade
1919-1921.

Subject

- (a) G.H.Q. Intelligence Section 1920 - .
- (b) The Active Service Unit 1921.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil

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STATEMENT OF EDWARD JOSEPH KELLIHER,

88 SOUTH CIRCULAR ROAD, KILMAINHAM, DUBLIN.

In the month of October 1919, I joined "C" Company, 3rd Battalion, Dublin Brigade, No. 1. Paddy Flanagan was my Company Captain and his two lieutenants were Joe O'Connor and Matthew Connolly. My section commander at the time was Ben Doyle.

My company paraded on an average of about two nights a week for drill at a place called, I think, the Dark Lanes, or Captain's Lane, Kimmage. In addition, I attended classes at 54 Erne St. where I was instructed on the Lee Enfield rifle and the hand-grenade. After about six months I was promoted squad leader. The principal business transacted at these council meetings concerned the detailing of men of the company for special duties, such as raids or minor operations.

G.H.Q. Intelligence Section.

During the month of October 1920, I was detailed by my company commander, Paddy Flanagan, to report on a certain night to Commandant O'Connor, Battalion O/C., at an address in Drury Street. When I did report, the commandant informed me that I had been selected for special duty. He did not indicate the nature of it, but he instructed me to report to 46 Parnell Sqr. There I was interviewed by either Tom Cullen or Frank Thornton, which of them I cannot say definitely. What precisely transpired at that meeting I cannot recall, but either Frank Thornton or Tom Cullen indicated to me the nature of the duties that I was in future to be concerned with, which was intelligence work. I was to be known as "Agent 102".

My first assignment was to observe the movements of British military officers who had been detailed for military tribunals trying prisoners. These officers resided at Baggot

Street and Fitzwilliam Square, and my duty was to go there each morning and note the times they left, the number of them that left, their addresses and the registration numbers of the military cars they travelled in. I would report the observations I had made in writing to Charlie Dalton and sign myself with my number '102'.

I had to report to No. 3 Crow St. each morning and there I was given copies of practically all the papers that came into the country to read. Other agents were similarly engaged. I was told to watch carefully for deaths or marriages of any relatives of the British military serving in the country, the idea being to try and locate the private addresses of the members of the forces concerned. Another duty there was to censor captured mails and make a note of anything that would be of value from the intelligence point of view. We looked upon No. 3 Crow St. as our headquarters at that time. Liam Tobin, Tom Cullen and Frank Thornton frequented it regularly and my instructions concerning my duties were issued mainly by Frank Thornton.

Activities against Enemy Agents and Spies.

District Inspector O'Sullivan was believed to be on special duty in Dublin Castle. I was given a description of him and was instructed to watch carefully his movements. When I identified him I trailed him for about a week. One evening in early December 1920, he was keeping an appointment with a lady friend of his in Henry St. I pointed him out to members of the squad and he was executed on the spot.

Peter Doran, a porter in the Wicklow Hotel, was believed to be an enemy agent, and instructions were given that his movements should be closely watched. Several members of the Intelligence Section took it in turn to trail him. I trailed him on one occasion and I was not very satisfactory as the

fellow escaped my attention by knowing the city better than I did. Apparently he knew he was being trailed because he availed of every opportunity to evade our attention.

At one time I was detailed to trail a squad of R.I.C. known as the 'Igoe Gang'. During the course of my trailing I observed that four R.I.C. men were in the habit of proceeding from the Depot to Dublin Castle in an open Ford touring car. They used leave the car in the Castle and would then proceed on foot to a restaurant on Ormond Quay. I reported this to Headquarters of Intelligence and I was instructed to follow the matter up. I carried out my instructions and, after a week, discovered this was a frequent practice of those men. I reported the facts again and G.H.Q. ordered the execution of those men. On a day late in February 1921, I accompanied members of the squad to Parliament Street and, after making arrangements with the members of the squad with regard to the signal which I would give them when the four R.I.C. men made their appearance, the members of the squad detailed for this operation took up their positions and awaited their arrival. I took up a position facing the squad members on the opposite side of the street. The signal I had arranged to give was to raise my bowler hat when the R.I.C. men were actually passing the squad members. As they were passing, I gave the signal and the squad opened fire and three of them fell dead on the pavement. It was learned later that their names were Constables Greer, McDonagh and Hoey.

Active Service Unit.

The Active Service Unit was formed in January 1921. It was composed of picked men from the different battalions of the Dublin No. 1 Brigade, the O/C. of which was Patrick Flanagan. I had nothing to do with the activities of that unit, but I do know that it operated under the jurisdiction of brigade headquarters and had nothing at all to do with

G.H.Q. On one occasion, however, I worked in close conjunction with this unit. It concerned an operation for the ambushing of Auxiliaries who at that time frequented various cafés in the vicinity of Grafton St. Instructions were given that these men were to be attacked on a certain evening in June 1921. My section mobilised at the Engineers' Hall, Gardiner's Row, where a number of men were detailed to operate with me. I cannot recall exactly the number, but I think there were at least six altogether.

Before I went there I had my instructions and they were: that I was to proceed to Grafton St. and to be there not later than 5.55 p.m. and to take charge of the operations carried out in the area of Grafton St. from Chatham St. to South King St. On our way over we met some other sections of the A.S.U. who seemed to be on their way back. When I asked them why they were returning, they informed me that there were military patrols very active on the far side of the quays. Myself and my comrades decided we would go ahead as originally instructed. We went ahead and arrived on time at our area. At about 6 p.m. two Auxiliaries (F/Company) stationed in the Castle, passed through our area in civilian clothes, but as the appointed time for the start of operations had not expired at that time we let them through. They proceeded up to the top of Grafton St. South King St. end, and stood there for a minute or two. Myself and Mr. Rigney had a consultation and we decided that if we had not received the signal up to the time that they were coming back we would carry out our instructions. The signal for the start of operations, which was to be the exploding of a bomb, was not, however, given.

The two Auxiliaries were now on their way down Grafton St. and we decided that something must have gone wrong, so we, therefore, decided to carry out our instructions. We fired on the two Auxiliaries and they fell mortally wounded. Their

names were Cadet Waring and Section Leader Appleby. This shooting had a sequel inasmuch as I was paraded by my own officers and asked to give a detailed explanation in writing, as to why these two men were shot in the absence of the starting signal. My explanation, however, satisfied them, and no further action was taken.

The Igoe Gang.

Towards the end of 1920, a number of R.I.C. men from the active areas in the country were selected to operate in the streets of Dublin, and were formed into a section which later came to be known as the "Igoe Gang". It got its name from its leader who was named Igoe. Its main function was to identify prominent Volunteers from country areas who may have been 'on the run' in Dublin.

I was one of many Intelligence officers detailed to trail and observe the movements of this gang. I cannot recall precisely how I established the identity of any member of this gang. It may have been that I was sent to the Depot to watch out for strange policemen coming out in civilian attire. I was at the Depot each morning about 9 a.m. One morning I observed six men in plain clothes leaving the Depot. I trailed them as far as Kingsbridge, where they turned and went up in the direction of Steeven's Hospital. I was in a bit of a predicament. I proceeded to Baker's publichouse, Arran Quay, where I knew the squad were. On arriving there I informed the squad and we proceeded up to Thomas St. where we waited for nearly an hour, but there was no sign of the Igoe gang. Several mornings after that I again tried to contact them, but failed. There was nothing very definite about their movements; they were most elusive.

Contacts.

The contacts with which I was in touch were not in a position to give information that could be regarded as of paramount importance. However, they were in a position to give a certain amount of information which I took from them and passed on to headquarters of Intelligence.

One of my contacts was a military policeman named Harte who was stationed in Dublin Castle. He was useful in this way, that some of the most considered important prisoners were detained in the Castle for some time, like Father Dominic and others of Church St. The military police were put in charge of those prisoners. He would tell me how the prisoners were getting along, how they were being treated, and any messages that were to be conveyed to relatives he usually carried them, and any other information that, in his opinion, would be of value, such as the names and duties of the military officers with whom he came in contact. He also reported whenever he could the visits to Dublin Castle of General Tudor, General Officer Commanding the Auxiliaries and Tans.

I used meet him in a publichouse at night time where he would communicate any information that he had for me. As far as I know, this man received no recompense for any of the information that he passed out to me.

Another contact I had was, as far as I recollect, a man named Daly, who was a billiards marker in the Kildare St. Club. I used meet him about once a week in a publichouse, Fanning's of Lincoln Place, where he would communicate any information concerning military or other important personages who might be frequenting the Club. His job was to listen mainly to the conversations of social groups and pick up anything that might be of value from our point of view.

Another contact was Tommy Burke, an ex-British soldier

and who were residing in houses in his area - he, being a policeman, would naturally know the occupants of the various houses, and, even if he did not know them, and when we told him that such and such a house was under suspicion from our point of view, all we had to do was to ask him who lived in the house.

Bloody Sunday.

About a week before Bloody Sunday, I was instructed to attend a Company Council meeting - I cannot recall where. I attended the meeting, but cannot recollect precisely what transpired. My recollection is that we were informed that a swoop was to be made on enemy agents residing in private houses on the following Sunday morning and that I, with others, were to be at 28/29 Lower Pembroke St. at 9 o'clock.

Between twenty and thirty of us mobilised for Pembroke St. and Paddy Flanagan was in charge. I remember Leo Duffy was detailed to get in over the wall at the back entrance and not allow anybody in or out from there. He was to come in the back way and hold up anybody around the back or in the kitchen of the house we were raiding. I was instructed to take charge of the front entrance and to allow nobody in or out and to warn our men inside of any approach of British forces. From my position at the door I did not know what was happening in the house. Our party remained there approximately ten minutes. Coming out I heard the men who actually took part in the executions discussing the matter. They said that about six enemy agents had been shot. At the time they were under the impression that they were all dead, but it transpired^{later} that some of them were only wounded.

In the afternoon, Leo Duffy and I attended a football match in Croke Park. The match had been in play for about quarter of an hour when suddenly a volley of shots rang out

and there was a stampede. I made my way out of the grounds as best I could and when I got out in the street, I found the place was entirely surrounded by Auxiliaries. When I got to one of the exit gates I was held up by an Auxiliary and searched as was everybody else. Finding nothing of an incriminating nature on my person, I was allowed to proceed.

Following Bloody Sunday I continued as a member of the Intelligence squad and remained with it up to the Truce.

Signed: Edward J. Kelliker
Date: 18th February 1951

Witness: William Ivory Condit

