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ROINN  COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.
STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1,260.....

Witness

*Redacted
personal
information.*

Identity.

Company Q.M.
and later 2nd Liout. Sylane Company
Irish Volunteers, Co. Galway.

Subject.

Sylane Company Irish Volunteers,
Tuam, Co. Galway, 1917-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

N11

File No. B. 2570.....

I and about fifteen men of the Slysane company were

Ballinrobe and Claremorris.

delaying the approach of reinforcements from Tuam, Galway, may have been one or two others - all for the purpose of There were two further road blocks on bye-roads. There main Tuam-Ballinrobe road, one on each side of the barrack, made, by felling trees. There were two road blocks on the blocking roads and guarding the road blocks which were men turned out. The majority of them were engaged in was very satisfactory. On the night of the attack, forty shortly before the attack at Castlegrove, and the result R.I.C. barrack. We had a lost mobilisation one night Slysane company took part in the attack on Castlegrove the attack at Castlehackett, and about forty men of (Slysane) had gained a good number of recruits, following Slysane company officers. By this time, our company before it occurred. I was told about it at a meeting of I myself heard of the proposed attack about a week

attack on Castlegrove barrack.

Dunmore battalion, were prominently identified with the Castlehackett barrack, and James Boloney, afterwards O/C, already mentioned in connection with the attack on Patrick Conroy and Michael Joseph Ryan, whom I have been formed by this time - March, 1920. Lieutenant Battalion. I do not think the North Galway Brigade had The attack was planned by Michael Moran, O/C, Tuam the main Tuam-Ballinrobe road, about six miles from Tuam. was the attack on Castlegrove R.I.C. barrack, situated on The next incident of importance that I remember

by the Volunteers.

was completely destroyed on Easter Saturday night, 1920,

engaged in the attack proper. We were in position along the wall of the main Tuam-Ballinrobe road, facing the barrack, at a range of from twenty-five to thirty yards. We were all armed with shotguns. The barrack was a very big, two-storey building, with many windows. I remember that we were to open fire when the mines at the gables exploded. I think that there was no explosion at one gable and that there were two at the other gable.

We opened fire on the windows and door in front of us, the moment we heard the explosion. Fire was returned immediately from the barrack and Verey lights went up. The attack lasted two hours at least and, during that time, there were several shouts of, "Surrender", to the garrison to which they invariably answered, "Never". I cannot remember any hand grenades having been used in the attack. I think it was James Boloney who gave the order to withdraw. Eight or nine men of Sylane company, including myself, with Captain Bernard Kelly in charge, covered the withdrawal of the remainder of the attacking party. The reason we were asked to cover the withdrawal was that we were from the locality and knew the lay of the land better than the others. There were about seventy or eighty men engaged in this attack, in which all companies of the Battalion were represented. The garrison consisted of about eight men and a sergeant. No casualty was sustained by the Volunteers. I don't know if any of the garrison was wounded. I would very likely have heard about it if any of them were killed or wounded. There was a good deal of blood on the road near the barrack the morning following the attack, and it appeared in the newspapers that the I.R.A. suffered casualties. We heard afterwards that the R.I.C. killed

men who held him prisoner and that I gave orders to the proceedings. O'Leary said that I was in charge of the and smoked cigarettes to show how little we cared about said so. During the trial, we chatted amongst ourselves. He did not recognize the authority of the court and

who held him prisoner. Two R.I.C. barracks there O'Leary identified us as the men Michael Higgins and Martin Connolly. We were tried in Volunteer Henry Hussey, who was my brother, and Volunteers and three other Volunteers. The other three were

field where I was working at the time. They arrested me force of R.I.C. and British military, surrounding the knew nothing of his escape until I saw him with a pig about three or four days, he escaped from custody. I to keep Connolly a prisoner pending his trial. After of the Republican courts. In any event, our Company was the I.R.A. I think that Mr. Albie O'Leary was then a judge there by the Volunteers for donating money in the name of He was a native of Milltown, Co. Galway, and was arrested prisoner's name was Martin Connolly, nicknamed "O'Leary".

of the late Mr. Louis O'Leary, solicitor, Galway. The and Mr. Albie O'Leary, a well-known Sinn Féin and a brother house in Belclare by James Moloney, O/C, Dunmore Battalion, late in May, 1920, a prisoner was brought to my

Volunteers a week or two after Easter, 1920. day after it being attacked, and it was destroyed by the remember. Castlegrove R.I.C. barracks was evacuated the attack took place in March, 1920, as well as I can people told us that they saw the blood on the road. The people who delivered milk at the barracks. Several as evidence of the "casualties". We heard this from the hens and spilled their blood on the road near the barracks