

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1918-21

BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 1437

ROINN



COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1437.

Witness

Redacted  
personal information.

Identity.

Company Captain.

Battalion Adjutant.

Subject.

Activities of Tuam Company, Tuam Battalion,  
Irish Volunteers, Co. Galway, 1914-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil.

File No 2773

Form B.S.M. 2

He did not lose his employment but was transferred to Belfast. I do not know how he fared afterwards. He was a native of Miltownmilly, Co. Clare.

I was just released from jail about the time that raids for arms were begun by the I.R.A. The moment we heard that the R.I.C. were taking up their guns from the farmers, we commenced to forestall them. These raids were only a matter of form, so that the farmers could say that the guns were forcibly taken from them by men whom they did not know. The owners of shotguns were sympathetic to the volunteers, and handed over their guns willingly. Parades and drilling went on in secret. The parades were well attended, and the volunteers were enthusiastic. I cannot remember anything of importance for the remainder of 1919 and the first three months of 1920.

In April 1920, Castlegrove R.I.C. barracks was attacked by the I.R.A. It was a large substantial building situated on the side of the Tuam-Ballinrobe road, about six miles from Tuam. It had steel shutters in the lower row of windows, at least. Michael Moran, commandant of the Tuam battalion, organised the attack and took charge of it. The garrison was about fifteen men. I am sure there were at least a hundred men engaged in the attack which lasted from about 2.30 a.m. to daybreak. They were armed with rifles and shotguns in the proportion of one rifle to nine shotguns. I had a Lee Enfield rifle, and volunteer Michael Mervin of Tuam company had another. Half the men engaged in the attack were from the Tuam and Barnaderg companies. The remainder were from Sylane, Killcroy and Gardenvale companies, with perhaps a few from Cortoon company. I remember that the men from Tuam and Barnaderg companies travelled together, on foot, to the attack, along the railway line.

It was expected that a mine, exploded at one of the gables, would blow a hole in it, by which the building could be entered. As far as I can remember, the men in charge of the mining were Thomas O'Grady, company engineer, Tuam company, and Michael Joseph Ryan of Barnaderg company who afterwards became brigade engineer, North Galway brigade. The mine was exploded, but it was not a success as it only cracked the gable wall. The majority of the I.R.A. had positions along the wall of the road, facing the front of the barrack. The range was only about thirty to thirty-five yards. I was in position at the rear of the building at about one hundred yards range. I covered the back entrance to the building. Firing went on continuously from about 2.30 a.m. to daybreak. The R.I.C. were called on to surrender several times, and they always replied with a volley. They threw up a good many Verey lights. The whole attacking force was withdrawn shortly before daybreak. Tuam and Barnaderg companies returned across country, together, to their own area. No casualties were suffered by the I.R.A., and none by the R.I.C., as far as I know. The barrack was evacuated the day following the attack.

The next incident I remember is the burning of Castlegrove barrack. It was not burned on Easter Saturday night when the evacuated barracks at Castlehackett, Barnaderg and Cummer were destroyed. Seamus Moloney, afterwards O/C, Glenamaddy battalion, and I burned it about a fortnight after Easter. We had one scout doing duty for us. We entered by the door at the rear, and saw a wire running from a box in the hall to the front door. We did not touch the box or the wire. We brought in dry hay and put it under the staircase. We sprinkled it

with paraffin, and then sprinkled the stairs and all  
woodwork. We first set fire to the woodwork upstairs and  
then to the staircase and hay underneath it. About  
twenty R.I.C. were stationed at the time at Colonel Luane's,  
within about three hundred yards of the barrack. They  
were protecting the colonel because of land trouble. As  
soon as the fire became visible to the R.I.C., they  
started firing at the burning building before we had left  
it. We left immediately as the fire had taken a good  
hold. After a while, we heard a very loud explosion  
which we learned afterwards blew the roof clean off the  
porch. We came to the conclusion that the box we had  
seen in the hall was a trap mine left by the R.I.C.

Shortly after this, I got pleurisy, and was sick  
in Tuam and in my own home in Corofin for about six weeks.  
I was back at work in Tuam in July. I remember the night  
following the attack on R.I.C. at Gallagh, about three  
miles from Tuam, where two R.I.C. men were killed and four  
disarmed. About 4 a.m. the next morning, I was awakened  
by rifle fire. I was in lodgings at the time in Bishop  
Street, and company engineer Thomas O'Grady was staying in  
the same house. We both got up and dressed when we heard  
the shooting, as we expected to be arrested. We were not  
afraid of being shot, as shootings of people in their  
homes had not then been commenced by the R.I.C. In our  
area, at any rate. When the shooting was over at about  
5 a.m., we walked around the town. The town hall was  
burning, and Canney Brothers' drapery store which adjoined  
the R.I.C. barracks. Fahy's drapery store, where I  
worked, was damaged. The houses of John Burke and James  
Nohilly, both in Dublin road, were also damaged. Windows  
had been broken in a good many houses. All the damage