

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 1425

ROINN



COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1425

Witness

Patrick Treacy,  
Kiltullagh,  
Glenamaddy,  
Co. Galway.

Identity.

Company Captain.

Battalion Adjutant.

Subject.

Activities of Glenamaddy Company, Irish Volunteers,  
1920, and  
North Galway Brigade Flying Column,  
1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil.

File No .. S.2738. ...

Form B S M 2

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
BURO STAIRE MILCATA 1913-21  
No. W.S. 1425

STATEMENT BY PATRICK TREACY,  
Kiltullagh. Glenamaddy. County Galway.

I was born on the 29th October, 1899, at Kiltullagh, Glenamaddy, and educated at Kilkerrin Monastery, which was then, and is now, conducted by the Franciscan Brothers.

My first association with the national movement was the occasion when I joined the Kilkerrin Sinn Féin Club in the year 1917. This club had a membership of between fifty and sixty, composed mainly of elderly men. I remember that Martin Farrell of Kilcornan was the Secretary when I became a member. The Chairman was Patrick Stephens of Ballaghduff, Kilkerrin, and the Treasurer was Thomas Diskin of Kiltullagh. Meetings were held once a fortnight, sometimes at Kilkerrin and sometimes at Welford House, now demolished.

The club was very active and enthusiastic. Sinn Féin literature was distributed and "Irish Nationality" was sold every Sunday outside the Parish Church at Kilkerrin. Lectures were occasionally delivered by prominent local Sinn Féin leaders, including James Haverty of Springlawn, Mountbellew. We took a keen interest in the by-elections about this time and our activities were intensified before the general election of 1918. There were several public meetings held in the Kilkerrin area. I cannot now remember the speakers but I remember well that they were always accompanied by James Haverty of Springlawn. A canvass on behalf of the Sinn Féin candidate - Dr. Brian Cusack - was carried out in the parish area of Kilkerrin. The most active men I remember in the club about this time were the Chairman, Mr. Patrick Stephens, and Mr. John J. Tyrrell, then a shop assistant at Kilkerrin. I remember well

canvassing the parish area in company with Edward Lee, now deceased. I became Secretary of the Kilkerrin Sinn Féin Club in the year 1919 and continued to act in this capacity until the club ceased to function.

I remember the attempt of the British to enforce conscription in this country and the reaction of the people of Kilkerrin in the matter. I have a clear recollection of a big anti-conscription meeting being held outside the village of Kilkerrin at which Rev. Patrick Colgan, P.P. Kilkerrin, presided. With him on the platform were Rev. Charles White, C.C., and Rev. James Biggins, C.C., both of Kilkerrin parish. I remember that Fr. Colgan, afterwards Canon Colgan, in his speech on that occasion said that no young man from his parish would be conscripted into the British Army except over his dead body. The meeting was large and enthusiastic. After the meeting there was a protest march from Kilkerrin to Glenamaddy headed by a fife and drum band. There were no Volunteers in the Kilkerrin parish at the time and I remember that in the protest march most of the young men who took part were armed with sticks. When the procession reached Glenamaddy the young men who took part were drilled by John Connor, who had resigned from the police force in England. I remember the anti-conscription pledge being signed by all parishioners of Kilkerrin outside the parish church.

The subscriptions for the Dáil Éireann Loan were collected by members of the Sinn Féin Club in the Kilkerrin Parish but I cannot remember the date. It was a house to house collection and every family in the parish, with two or three exceptions, subscribed.

I joined the Kilkerrin Company of the I.R.A. on its formation about the month of April, 1920. I think it was the last company in the Glenamaddy Battalion to be formed. The strength was about twenty and the first Company Captain was John Stephens. I was 1st Lieutenant and Brian Cunniffe, afterwards Company Captain, was then 2nd Lieutenant. Drilling was carried out once a week, usually on Tuesday evenings after working hours. The men turned up regularly and punctually and were enthusiastic. The drill was mostly simple foot drill and some arms drill with shotguns, most of which had been collected from farmers in the company area during the year 1920. I cannot account for the fact that there was no company in Kilkerrin before April, 1920. I was young at the time. I do remember that it was Fr. William Rattigan, C.C., Kilkerrin, who was instrumental in the formation of the company. In fact, he presided over the meeting at the old Courthouse in Kilkerrin at which the company was formed. He was a very patriotic priest who never let an occasion pass without hitting at the British authorities.

On a reorganisation of the Glenamaddy Company I was appointed Captain of the company. The Lieutenants were Frank Mahon and John Jeffers. The strength was about thirty-five at that time but it had increased to about sixty before the truce of July, 1921. It was a good active company and parades were held regularly every week. Before I took command of the company in October, 1920, as far as I can recollect, all arms in the company area had been collected. As far as I remember, they amounted to about forty shotguns, two .22 rifles and one blunderbuss, all mechanically good. Parades and drilling of the Glenamaddy Company took place at night after work and there was target practice with the .22 rifles on Sundays. At this time all parades, drilling and

target practice were held in secret.

I had to go 'on the run' about January or February, 1921, as my home commenced to be raided in search of me. It was raided on numerous occasions by R.I.C. and Black and Tans. About this time there was a collection of money from the general public for Volunteers 'on the run'. It was a house to house collection and was made by the Volunteers themselves. The response was very generous and the money was handed over to the Battalion Q/M. Out of this collection all Brigade and Battalion Staff Officers and Company Captains were provided with uniforms, which were made by Messrs. Kenny and Co., Tuam. Men 'on the run' received tobacco, cigarettes, leggings and other articles of clothing where necessary. The uniforms were not worn on active service and the first opportunity of wearing them came at the time of the truce. I think the uniforms were got in the hope that they could be worn openly on active service if the arms that we hoped to be supplied with by G.H.Q. were forthcoming.

I remember about the month of February, 1921, I got a dispatch from Battalion Commandant Seamus Moloney, Glenamaddy Battalion, to be at Gortaleam School before daybreak with arms and one day's rations. When I got there across country there were about thirty men assembled, with Brigade Commandant Patrick Dunleavy in charge. I then learned that we were to attack a lorry of R.I.C. expected to travel from Dunmore to Ballymoe. The ambush position was a few hundred yards to the Williamstown side of Gortaleam Cross. Before the main body took positions Volunteer Dalton from the Tuam Battalion area and I were detailed to take up our position in a wood about a mile from the ambush position in the Dunmore direction and to block the road with stones immediately the enemy vehicle had passed. We remained in the wood all day but no enemy

vehicle passed. Shortly after this an active service unit or Flying Column as it was more commonly known, was formed in the North Galway or Tuam Brigade which was composed of two battalions - Tuam and Glenamaddy.

The following officers were selected for the Flying Column and served in it from then to the truce wholetime:

Patrick Dunleavy, Bgde. Comdt. and Column Comdt.  
 Thomas Tarmay, Brigade Adjt.  
 Patrick Conway, Brigade Q/M.  
 James Moloney, Comdt., Glenamaddy Battalion.  
 Martin Ryan, Vice Comdt., " "  
 Jack Knight, Battn. Q/M, G " "  
 Martin Mannion, Adjutant, " "  
 Thomas Dunleavy, Comdt. Tuam Battalion.  
 Thomas Nohilly, Adjt. " "  
 Thomas Ryan, Q/M " "  
 Thomas Mannion, Capt., Dunmore Coy., Glenamaddy Battn.  
 Brian Cunniffe, Capt., Kilkerrin Coy., " "  
 Timothy Dunleavy, Capt. Barnaderg Coy., Tuam Battn.  
 Thomas Feerick, Capt., Milltown Coy., " "  
 Peter Brennan, Milltown Coy, Tuam Battn. (not sure of  
 his rank, I think it was Volunteer  
 Patrick Treacy, Capt., Glenamaddy Coy., Glenamaddy Battn.  
 afterwards Adjt., Glenamaddy Battn.

Attacking positions were occupied at several places in the brigade area from then to the truce but the enemy did not come the way as expected except on two occasions. One of these was on the Tuam-Dunmore road at a place called Carrareagh about midway between Tuam and Dunmore. The time would be about end of April or early May but I cannot be sure of this. The full Flying Column had waited in position from daybreak and about three in the afternoon one lorry of R.I.C. travelling towards Dunmore was fired on by us. It was a Crossley tender, as far as I can remember, and it did not stop nor did its occupants return our fire as far as I know. Battalion Commandant Thomas Dunleavy was in charge at the time the R.I.C. passed. His brother, the Brigade and Column Commandant, had been in charge most of the day but was called away by dispatch. I heard afterwards that D.I. Healy of the Dunmore R.I.C. garrison was wounded by our fire.

The second occasion on which the enemy came into our prepared positions was about the end of May or beginning of June and the place was the Moylough/Mountbellew road about midway between Moylough and Mountbellew. It was on a Sunday and I remember it clearly on account of the very strenuous week the Flying Column had had immediately preceding it. The previous Monday we went into prepared positions in the Polredmond Company area and remained there four days as well as I can remember. From Polredmond area we went to Park West and lay in ambush there for one day. We then went to the village of Fiddane in the Kilkerrin Company area where we rested part of the night. We were at least seven days without undressing and had only snatches of sleep during that time. To add to our hardships most of us suffered at that time from a severe attack of what was then known as Sinn Féin or Republican itch, which was aggravated by the very warm weather. I remember we treated ourselves with ointment which we got from Dr. Mangan, Battalion M.O.

On this Sunday morning late in May or early in June we arrived in Moylough. I remember we entered an old unoccupied castle to the west of the village. It was there that the decision was made to take up positions on the Moylough-Mountbellew road to attack a party of R.I.C. that went every Sunday morning from Mountbellew to the Protestant Church in Moylough. I think it was Volunteer Thomas Higgins of Mountbellew Battalion who furnished the information as to the movements of patrols in that area. Moylough and Mountbellew were outside our own brigade area. I have no idea why we entered the Mountbellew Battalion area. I did not think much about it at the time as a matter of that kind would be one for the Brigade Staff, three of whom were in the Flying Column and present there that day. From the old

ruin we proceeded eastwards and to the northern side of the main Moylough/Mountbellew road. We intended to cross the road and take up our attacking positions on the southern side of the road about halfway between the two places. We were just about to cross the road when the R.I.C. on bicycles were observed coming from Mountbellew.

It was then too late to take up any position and we hoped they would pass without seeing us. We crouched down and they passed without even looking in our direction. We then took up the position we had originally intended to occupy on the southern side of the road and waited for the R.I.C. to return from Church. The party consisted of about a dozen men. There were seventeen of us all armed with rifles, all magazine type and mostly Lee Enfields. The R.I.C. party was armed with rifles. I cannot remember if they had revolvers as well. After some time word was brought to us by Volunteer Jimmy Hynes of the Barnaderg Company, Tuam Battalion, that the R.I.C. had gone back to Mountbellew by another route. We learned afterwards that they went back by Gorteen and Longford, the latter place being on the main Mountbellew/Roscommon road about one mile from Mountbellew.

We stayed in our position so as not to be seen going across country in broad daylight. At about 3 p.m. a single R.I.C. man passed by our position cycling in the direction of Moylough. Brigade Commandant Patrick Dunleavy asked for two of the Column who would volunteer to follow him to Moylough. I volunteered to do so and, accompanied by Captain Feerick, followed after the R.I.C. man on foot. We caught sight of him about a mile from Moylough talking to two women and a child. We

learned that they were his wife and daughter and a relative who had gone out from Moylough to meet him. Captain Feerick and I walked behind the party. We gradually narrowed the gap between us as we approached the village. By the time he turned in to what I presumed to be his own house I was almost close enough for revolver range. I ran towards him, gave him 'hands up' and fired one round over his head. He came towards me for a few paces and then turned and ran away from me. His wife, daughter and the other woman stood in my path but I got past them and emptied my gun at him. I saw him fall and I had to leave as I had no more .45 ammunition. I thought I had killed him but I learned later that he was severely wounded and was attended by a priest and doctor. I went back to the Flying Column and reported to Commandant Dunleavy that I had killed an R.I.C. man.

The object in attacking the R.I.C. man was to draw the R.I.C. from Mountbellew to Moylough. It actually had that effect, for about an hour after the shooting of the R.I.C. man in Moylough one lorry of R.I.C. and two private motor cars passed in the direction of Moylough. They were allowed to pass. They returned in about an hour. They were travelling slowly, a private car first, followed by the lorry at a distance of about thirty to forty yards. Then came the second private car. When the lorry was about the centre of our position we opened fire on it on a whistle signal from Commandant Patrick Dunleavy. The range was about 150 yards with seventeen riflemen firing. The private car behind the lorry came to a halt. It had no other option as the lorry blocked the road. The private car in front of the

lorry did not stop. It very likely contained the wounded R.I.C. man.

Almost immediately after we opened fire the lorry came to a halt and the occupants jumped out and took cover on the opposite side of the road, from where they immediately opened fire on us. They had good cover behind the bank of the road and their own lorry. I would say that there were eighteen to twenty men in the lorry. I could make no attempt to say how many were in the private car that stopped, as I was at the Mountbellew end of the ambush position. The length of our position was from eighty to a hundred yards. The fight lasted roughly about an hour. After that time we were forced to withdraw owing to shortage of ammunition. I can definitely say that twenty-two of my rounds misfired. I heard others say that they had similar experiences. The R.I.C. fought well but made no attempt to pursue us when we withdrew. Their fire was accurate as near my position I could see the butts of trees on the fence being skinned by their fire. Perhaps one of the causes that influenced the Column Commandant to withdraw was the defective ammunition. I remember that a few rounds of what was supposed to be good stuff was passed round. Another was the proximity of the Mountbellew R.I.C. barrack, but I would say the main cause was the shortage of ammunition. There were no I.R.A. casualties. We heard that three of the R.I.C. were killed. It was well known that three of them were not seen in Mountbellew after that evening. Those who took part in this fight were:

Brigade Commandant Patrick Dunleavy (in charge)  
 Brigade Adjutant Thomas Tarmay  
 Brigade Q/M Patrick Conway



Patrick Dunleavy in charge, but the patrol did not come.

In March, as well as I remember, we took up positions at a place called Carrareagh on the Tuam/Dunmore road about midway between the two places. We expected a lorry of R.I.C. which passed the place almost daily. The full Flying Column, under the command of Brigade Commandant Patrick Dunleavy, remained there one whole day but the lorry did not pass. The Flying Column was strengthened that day by a big number of Volunteers from adjoining companies armed with shotguns.

In April, 1921, the Flying Column, with Brigade Commandant Patrick Dunleavy in charge, took up ambush positions at Clonbern on the Dunmore/Moylough road, about one hundred yards from the Clonbern R.C. Church. The Flying Column, all armed with rifles, were located in a two-storey house on the side of the road. The house was then belonging to a man named Freaney. Shotgunmen were placed about thirty yards away on the opposite side of the road right inside the fence. There were about forty men in all, seventeen (members of the Flying Column) armed with rifles and the remainder with shotguns.

At the time there was an agitation in this area for the division of land belonging to a landlord named John Henry Burke. This man was very friendly with the R.I.C. in Dunmore and his cattle were driven off his land the night before we took up positions so that the R.I.C. would help him to recover them. We were in high hopes that they would come out but they failed to come. We had gone into our positions at daybreak as usual. About 10 a.m. a local landlord named Charles O'Rourke, who also had a big place at Birmingham near Tuam, arrived at Clonbern

accompanied by his daughter and a man named Thomas Hannon. The party were on horseback. Hannon was at the time being sought for by the I.R.A. as he had been found guilty of spying. He was immediately placed under arrest.. There was some doubt as to his identity but this was soon cleared up by officers who knew him well. He was held prisoner all day with a number of other people whom we had to detain as a safety measure. The expected lorry of R.I.C. did not come to help Mr. Burke round up his cattle as we had expected. We vacated our positions at dusk. Hannon was taken under escort to the house of Rev. Fr. Waldron, C.C., Clonbern parish, where he was allowed some time to prepare himself for his execution, of which he had been notified earlier in the day by Brigade Commandant Dunleavy. After being spiritually consoled by Fr. Waldron he was taken about half a mile from the parish church, blindfolded and executed by shooting. There was a firing party of seven men. Hannon's body was labelled "Spy" and left in the field where he fell. I heard afterwards that the verdict at the inquest was six bullets in the heart and one in the neck.

I remember that the Flying Column spent about ten days in the Abbeyknockmoy Company area, Tuam Battalion, in the hope of attacking a party of British military which occasionally travelled between Monivea and Abbeyknockmoy. I cannot remember very much about it as it was about twenty-two miles from Glenamaddy, my native district. As regards time, I think it was in the month of June, 1921, and after the attack on the R.I.C. on the Moylough/Mountbellew road.

There was a very big-round-up in the Glenamaddy Battalion area in the month of April, 1921, as far as I can remember. It remains in my memory that the area surrounded was approximately fourteen miles by seven. British military from Castlerea, Claremorris and Galway City took part. There were scores of lorries and one aeroplane. The R.I.C. were also there in force to identify the captured men. Some few members of the Flying Column were inside the encircled area but managed to conceal themselves and to avoid capture. In fact, no Volunteers was captured in the round-up. I remember that Dean Macken, P.P., Dunmore, went to Cloonminda where those rounded up were assembled, to ensure that they would not be ill-treated.

I remember before the Flying Column was formed that I took charge of three Volunteers and lay in ambush on three or four occasions for R.I.C. who had been transferred to Ballymoe after the R.I.C. barrack in Glenamaddy had been evacuated. These men left their families in Glenamaddy and occasionally came from Ballymoe to visit them. They usually travelled on bicycles and were in mufti. They did not come on any occasion on which we lay in wait for them.

I attended Battalion Council meetings which I can say definitely were held regularly every month. They were usually held at Ballinastack in the Glenamaddy Company area and were well attended.

The Glenamaddy Battalion Staff, as far as I remember, were:

Battalion Comdt.	-	James Moloney
" Vice Comdt.	-	Martin Ryan
" Adjt.	-	Martin Mannion to the time he was wounded about April, 1921. Patrick Treacy (myself) during the illness of Martin Mannion.

Q/M - John Knight.  
M/O - Dr. Mangan.

There were ten companies in the battalion.

The companies and company captains, as well as I can remember were:

'A' (Dunmore) Coy.	- Michael Ronan, followed by Thos. Mannion. I cannot give dates.
'B' (Kiltevena) "	- Roger Rabbitte from formation to truce.
'C' (Polredmond)	- John Glennon, " "
'D' (Williamstown)	- Patrick Noonan " "
'E' (Kilcroan) (Ballymoe)	- John Hanly " "
'F' (Glynsk)	- Thomas Burke " "
'G' (Kilkerrin)	- John Stephens to July, 1920. Brian Cunniffe from then to the truce.
'H' (Clonbern)	- John Mahon from formation to the truce.
'I' (Glenamaddy)	- Frank Mahon from October, 1920. Patk. Treacy (myself) to truce.
'J' (Kilbegnet.)	- John McDonagh from formation to the truce.

There were no Cumainn na mBan in the Battalion area prior to the 11th July, 1921, nor had any Republican Police been organised as far as I am aware. Any work under the Dáil Éireann Courts done by police in other areas was in this area done by members of the I.R.A. I did it myself on occasions. This question of Republican Police brings to my mind another duty performed by the I.R.A. in this area. We approached families who had a member or members in the R.I.C. with the object in view that these families would get in touch with their R.I.C. members and induce them to resign from that force. I remember distinctly one such family - Glennons of Polredmond Company area.

The result was that Thomas Glennon of the R.I.C. resigned, joined the I.R.A. and with Volunteer Patrick Quigley of Glynsk Company area became the first two Republican Policemen in Glenamaddy just after the truce in July, 1921. I remember that rooms were provided for them and paid for by the I.R.A. so that a full-time police service could be available in the town of Glenamaddy.

I cannot remember any friendly member of the R.I.C. in the Glenamaddy or Kilkerrin Company areas. The local people were sympathetic and generous in the extreme. No words of mine could do justice to their kindness and generosity. Food and shelter were ours at all times of day and night. We were no doubt a burden on them but they regarded it a great privilege to help us. There were three villages in the brigade area outstanding in their support of the Flying Column. They were Blackstick in the Barnaderg Company area, Shannaughmore in the Glenamaddy Company area and Timacat in the Kilkerrin Company area.

In the Glenamaddy and Kilkerrin Company areas we had at the time two priests who were very great sympathisers. One was Fr. James Fergus, C.C., Glenamaddy, now Bishop of Achonry. He gave spiritual consolation to men "on the run", whom he welcomed to his house and received them at any hour of the night. The other, Fr. William Rattigan, C.C., Kilkerrin, has since died. I have already referred to his presiding over the meeting at which the Kilkerrin Company of the I.R.A. was formed. In the course of one of his sermons in the church at Kilkerrin, Fr. Rattigan condemned the methods of the British military and R.I.C. to the extent that the sergeant of the local R.I.C. garrison could stand it no longer and left the church

before the sermon had concluded. The sergeant was so confused that instead of leaving the church by the door nearest to where he had been sitting, he went a roundabout way towards another door. Fr. Rattigan said to him in a very soft and low tone, "You will make less noise if you leave by the other door."

Signed:

*Patrick Tracy*

Date:

*19th May 1956.*

Witness:

*G. Moynihan*

(Investigator)

