

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BUREAU STAIRS MILITARY 1913-21
No. W.S. 1076

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1,076.....

Witness

Anthony Malone,
Ennis Road,
Miltown-Malbay,
Co. Clare.

Identity.

Captain Glendine Company Irish Volunteers,
Co. Clare, 1919 - ;

Adjutant and Vice O/C. 4th Battalion
Mid-Clare Brigade.
Subject.

Glendine Company Irish Volunteers, Co. Clare,
1914-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

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BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21, 1076
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STATEMENT BY ANTHONY MALONE,

Ennis Road, Miltown-Malbay, Co. Clare.

(Formerly Vice O/C., 4th Battalion, Mid-Clare Brigade)

I was born 64 years ago in the townland of Glendiné, Miltown-Malbay. My father was a small farmer who, like his people before him, never had to my knowledge any connection with national movements of the past. On the maternal side I had an uncle who was a member of the Fenian Brotherhood and he emigrated to Australia when he was a young man.

At present I am the Rate Collector for the Miltown-Malbay district and my wife runs a grocer's shop at the above address.

Along with the majority of the young men in the Miltown-Malbay district, I became interested in the movement for native government during the Home Rule agitation in the years prior to 1914. In those days I had a big regard for the national leader of the time, John Redmond, and I became a member of the National Volunteers in Miltown-Malbay in 1914. Our instructors were British army reservists who rejoined the colours when the First World War broke out and their departure resulted in the cessation of the National Volunteer movement in the district.

I lost faith in the Irish Party after the 1916 Rising as did lots of others at that time and, following the success of the Sinn Fein candidate, Mr. de Valera, in the East Clare by-election, I was fully convinced that the proper place for me was in the ranks of the party which he then represented. He came to Miltown-Malbay to address a public meeting in October 1917, when a branch of Sinn Fein was formed in the area and I became a member of that Club on its formation. It was called the "Thomas Ashe" Cumann. The chairman was Denis O'Loghlin and the secretary was John Sullivan.

Later on, Irish Volunteer companies were established in the locality - one at Miltown and another at Glendine. I joined the latter unit.

For some months I don't think we had any officers and the companies existed more in name than anything else. In the spring of 1918 Martin Devitt, afterwards Vice O/C. of the Mid-Clare Brigade, came into the area and the first officers were elected under his direction. Tom Cleary was elected captain; Michael Foudy, 1st Lieutenant, and myself 2nd Lieut. of the Glendine Company, the strength of which was about 50.

The threat of conscription was then overhanging the county and orders were received by the company that every man should provide himself with a pike. In Glendine the pikeheads were forged for us by a blacksmith named Garrihy, in May. There was a British military post in Lahinch at the time and as the pikes were being forged, two members of the company went each day to the Smithy to do guard lest the blacksmith might be caught on the job by the military. In order to pay for the pike-shafts, a very successful dance was held in O'Brien's of Leeds (Kimberley). Money was very scarce at the time and many of the lads could not afford to pay for the price of a shaft. We had some exercises with these pikes but I'm afraid they were more of a novelty than anything else at the time. At any rate, after the removal of the conscription threat they were discarded and I think most of them were treated as scrap. The Glendine Company kept on drilling, usually holding two parades a week, one on Sunday and the other on week nights.

In December 1918, six men from the Glendine Company went to East Mayo to help the Sinn Fein candidate in the General Election campaign. The "Big 'Flu" was raging at the time and, being affected by it, I was not physically fit to go with them. In fact, four of them had to go to hospital

after going to Mayo.

There was a reorganisation of the Irish Volunteers in County Clare in January 1919. The county was divided into three brigades and our district then became part of the Mid-Clare Brigade. Arising out of this reorganisation I was elected captain of the Glendine Company with Patrick Kerins as 1st Lieutenant and Patrick McMahon as 2nd Lieutenant. The company was part of the 4th Battalion, the O/C. of which was Ignatius O'Neill. After that there was a rapid improvement in the Volunteer movement in our district. Battalion Council meetings and company council meetings were held regularly and a full complement of officers, adjutant, quartermaster, intelligence officer and section commanders were appointed in each company. A company arms fund was also set up to which the members contributed a levy of twopence per week and this was augmented by the proceeds from dances. The Volunteers also collected all available firearms from the civilian population around this period. In Glendine we got nine or ten shotguns and they were in most cases handed over by the owners without reluctance along with whatever cartridges they happened to have. The details of the guns so collected are now forgotten by me.

I think it was about August 1918 that all Sinn Féin Clubs throughout the country were instructed to arrange for the reading at public meetings of a proclamation issued by the headquarters of that organisation. In Miltown-Malbaw the proclamation was read by James D. Kenny. He belonged to a strata of society which gave few members to the movement for national independence, at least in Co. Clare. He lived on a big grazing farm outside the town along with a sister. For having read the proclamation he was arrested and sentenced to a term of imprisonment - I think it was for 12 months. While he was in jail in Belfast some of his neighbours took

it into their heads to take advantage of his absence to put their cattle and other animals to graze on his lands without payment and without his or his sister's approval. There was then in Miltown a parish priest, Canon Hannon, and, while he was by no means in agreement with Sinn Fein, his sense of righteousness was offended by the action of these trespassers. He denounced in private the Volunteer leaders in the area who tolerated such interference with the imprisoned man's property. The Battalion O/C. put the matter before the other Volunteer officers in the area and it was decided to use the Volunteer organisation to defend Mr. Kenny's interests. The local company Miltown, drove the cattle off the lands, but each time the trespassers put the cattle back again. Finally it was decided to teach these people a lesson and to use the most of the battalion for that purpose.

On 12th January 1919, the Miltown and Glendine companies mobilised and marched to Mr. Kenny's lands. The animals owned by the trespassers were rounded up and driven along the main road through the village of Miltown-Malbay and on almost as far as Ennis about 18 miles away. The assembly of Volunteers was escorted part of the way by the R.I.C. from Miltown, but they made no attempt to interfere. In the course of a few days afterwards, the R.I.C. in large numbers, suddenly swooped on a number of the men involved in the driving of the cattle and arrested them on charges of riotous behaviour. Of course, convictions were secured and the accused were sentenced to terms of imprisonment unless they gave undertakings to be of good behaviour in future. I believe that such undertakings were forthcoming, as they were all released after a couple of weeks.

Following the cattle drive the British Government declared Miltown-Malbay a 'military area' and troops were brought into the town to reinforce the R.I.C. whose strength

was also augmented. The district was subjected to all the objectionable restrictions associated with military rule. Fairs and meetings were banned, movements of persons into and outside the area was allowed only on the production of a permit from the sergeants of the R.I.C., barricades were erected on the roads at different points in the area at which sentries were posted who questioned and searched pedestrians and passengers in carts and motor cars. Despite all these restrictions the Volunteer companies in Miltown and Glendine mobilised and drilled though, of course, secretly and in out of the way places. As far as I can now remember, the restrictions were enforced for about six months.

About July 1919, at a meeting of the battalion staff held in O'Dwyer's of Lahinch, I was elected adjutant of the 4th Battalion, but until the following December I remained captain of the Glendine Company. In that month I relinquished the latter post and was replaced by the 1st Lieutenant of the company, Patrick Kerins. I was still battalion adjutant ~~at~~ *until 20/12/1920 when I was appointed Vice O/C.* ~~the Truce, declared on 11th July 1921.~~

I believe it was at the same meeting at which I was elected battalion adjutant that it was decided to attack Connolly R.I.C. Barracks. The barracks was held by a sergeant and four constables. It was a stone, single-storey building standing on its own ground and we hoped to capture it by the use of explosives and home-made bombs. The Vice Brigade O/C., Martin Devitt was in charge of the attacking party which consisted of 16 or 17 men armed mostly with shotguns, though we also had about two service rifles. Ignatius O'Neill, Battalion O/C., and his cousin, Fred McKenna, a deserter from the Australian army, used the two rifles.

The attack began about midnight on 19th July 1920. Devitt called out: "Sergeant O'Shea, surrender the hut and spare the lives of your men". Simultaneously, one of the

Volunteers, using a heavy sledge hammer, tried to batter in the front door, but this attempt failed as the door was secured by a heavy chain. O'Neill and McKenna then opened fire with their rifles from behind a wall at the back of the building. The police replied from well-prepared portholes and the firing was kept up for about an hour. At this time the explosives and bombs had not arrived and our O/C., realising that he was wasting ammunition in trying to take the barracks without the explosives, called off the attack. There were no casualties on either side, and I cannot remember any person being arrested over the attack. Certainly I was not interrogated by the authorities in connection with it.

In November 1919, I got information that there were some arms and ammunition hidden in Colonel Tottenham's house at Mount Callan, Inagh, and reported the matter at a Battalion Council meeting held in the middle of that month in Liberty Hall, Cloonagh. The house was raided by a party of Volunteers drawn mainly from the Glendine Company under Commandant Ignatius O'Neill. Though Colonel Tottenham put up a fierce resistance he was overpowered and all the arms and ammunition in the house was captured by our men. The booty included rifles (sporting type), two or three revolvers and some shotguns. ~~Though~~ I was ~~not~~ a member of the raiding party ^{and} my house was searched a few days afterwards by a strong force of R.I.C. and military, *and though I had 50 rounds of .45 ammunition hidden in a hay stack it was not found*

In the latter end of 1919 the area of Letterkelly, between Miltown and Inagh, was organised into a Volunteer company on instructions from Brigade Headquarters by myself and Patrick Kerins. This company became known as "H" Coy. 4th Battalion, and Tim McMahon was appointed captain.

During the winter of 1919/20 Ernie O'Malley, G.H.Q. organiser, came into the Mid Clare Brigade area and he took

our battalion on manoeuvres at Toor, Moybeg and Cloonagh on three different occasions. He also mobilised the brigade, battalion and some of the company officers in Killamona with a view to attacking the military post in Lahinch, but for some reason or other this attack was cancelled.

At the end of February 1920, the Mid-Clare Brigade sustained a great loss through the death in action of its Vice-Brigadier, Martin Devitt. I was in charge of the Volunteer parade which accompanied his remains from Ennistymon Workhouse, where an inquest was held, to the burial ground at Cloonagh.

On Holy Saturday night, April 1920, the vacated R.I.C. barracks at Lahinch was destroyed by units of the 4th Battn. During the course of its burning I was injured and three Volunteers were badly burned.

A number of prisoners who were on hunger-strike in Mountjoy Jail were released about the middle of April 1920. On the night of 16th April a number of people, mostly members of the I.R.A., were celebrating their release at Canada Cross, Miltown-Malbay. These people had lit a big bonfire and were singing songs around it when R.I.C. and military came on the scene and opened fire. They killed three men and wounded dozens of others. The deceased were given a military funeral which was attended by thousands from all parts of Clare. At the graveside in ^{Ballard} Ballon there was a firing party of which I was a member, but there was no interference by the authorities. Following that incident, the civilian population all over North and West Clare became very hostile to the R.I.C. who were held to be primarily responsible for the shootings. The people refused to serve them food or fuel and the police retaliated by commandeering their requirements.

After last Mass in Miltown-Malbay on the four Sundays succeeding the deaths of these three men, the Rosary was recited at Canada Cross where they were shot.

At a Battalion Council meeting held in August 1920,

at Lahinch, all company officers were ordered to keep a sharp lookout on all movements of the R.I.C. and military in their company areas and to report on the most suitable places where attacks could be made on the enemy who, at this stage, had begun to use motor lorries as their principal means of transport. In this connection I went to the Letterkelly district accompanied by Patrick Kerins, O/C, Glendine Company; Donal Lehane, Lahinch, and Stephen Gallagher of Moy. We had selected a position which we regarded as ideal both for attack and retreat if necessary. However, the local company captain, who joined us later, pointed out that lorries of enemy troops only passed there occasionally. At the next meeting of the Battalion Council I presented my report, as did a number of others, and it was there decided to attack a tender of R.I.C. and Black and Tans which usually travelled on a Wednesday between Ennistymon and Miltown on Wednesday, 22nd September. It was decided to confine the operation to men from the 4th Battalion and to ask each company to supply six or seven men, I forget which.

On Wednesday morning, about 5 a.m., the contingents from all the companies in the battalion, except Ballyea and Lavreen, met at Mullahan's, outside Lahinch, and, after numbering, set off towards Miltown. At Rineen, two miles or so from Miltown, the party was divided into sections to occupy positions selected to attack the tender. Altogether I would now say there were about 25 armed men in the party. Of these five riflemen, twelve men with shotguns and two men with bombs were placed along a bohereen which led from the main road for about 150 yards diagonally across the steep slope of Rineen Hill to the railway line about 30 yards from the road. On the opposite or north side of the road Patrick Kerins and myself, each with a service rifle, were placed behind a low fence 20 yards from the road, while to our right and about 200 yards

near to Miltown-Malbay were two more men similarly equipped. They were, I think, Steve Gallagher and John Burke. Scouts were posted along the ridge of the Rineen Hill as far as Rineen on the Lahinch side and as far as Arran View on the Miltown side. About noon we noticed a stir among the scouts and then heard them announce that three cars were coming. The order was then given by Ignatius O'Neill to let the cars pass. He felt that our force was not strong enough to deal with three lorries. In a few minutes, only one lorry containing six R.I.C. passed on to Miltown. Apparently what happened was that the scouts on the extreme end of the line of scouts shouted: "Police car coming" and in course of transmitting the message to the main party it was wrongly picked up by one of the scouts as "three cars coming" and thus the O/C. received the wrong message.

The police car had no sooner passed than the Angelus bell from Miltown Church could be heard and, about the same time, John Clune of the Inagh Company was sent on a bike to Miltown to ascertain where the police tender was and if it was likely to return by the same route. He returned with the news that the tender was outside the R.I.C. Barracks in Miltown faced for the direction of Rineen. Soon after, the tender came along and as it came into the ambush position the pre-arranged signal shot was fired. There was an immediate volley from the different positions. I fired 3 or 4 rounds at the men sitting in the cab and next I saw the driver slump over the wheel as blood pumped from a wound in his neck. He seemed to be staring directly at Kerins and myself. The men on the other side of the road poured several rounds into the tender and, in a matter of minutes, the attack was over. By some extraordinary means, one of the police

managed to get out of the tender and, under cover of the wall of the road, made his way into Connor's field towards Miltown. He had travelled about 300 yards when he was seen and shot dead by some of the riflemen placed near the railway line on the southern position.

As soon as the firing ceased the lorry was rushed. All the occupants were dead. Everything of military value was seized ^{but} ~~and~~ the tender was burned, ^{as we had not time to do so.} We got six Lee Enfield rifles; six .45 revolvers; a couple of thousand rounds of .303 ammunition and some Mills bombs. Incidentally one of the bombs thrown at the tender during the attack hopped off the vehicle and into the field on the other side of the road where it exploded.

Kerins and myself joined the main party after the attack and we were making our way up the side of Rineen Hill when the shout: "Military" was heard. Taking a look in the Lahinch direction I saw, about 300 yards away, a line of crawling khaki figures going along by a wall. We quickly made our way to the top of the hill and a group, of which I was one, got into a drain which ran for part of the way into a dip in the ground on the other side of the hill where we came under heavy machine gun and rifle fire from the military who had, by then, got to the brow of the hill on our left and had taken up positions behind a stone wall which gave them a good view and command of the ground into which we had retreated. From the drain we rushed singly into an adjoining meadow further on. There cocks of hay, which were still out due to the late harvest, provided enough cover to enable us to dodge from cock to cock until eventually we managed to reach good shelter and fairly secure country in Ballyraskin. With Patrick Lehane of Lahinch I was as far as James Mullahane's and there parted with him for the last time, as that night he was trapped and burned to death in one of the houses in Lahinch that had been

set on fire by the British troops in the frenzied reprisals which they carried out in revenge for their comrades who had been shot in Rineen. By the time I reached Mullahane's, most of the I.R.A. had also got into that county and the firing had ceased. It was then around 4 or 5 o'clock.

I decided to go on to Lackamore. On the way I went into Steve Gallagher's house and found there before me about a dozen of the men who were in the ambush. We got tea and spent some time discussing the events of the day. I then went on towards my own home where I arrived after nightfall and got a change of clothes. That night I rejoined Patrick Kerins in White's of Cloghanmore and having had no sleep for the two previous nights we went to bed with a guard of about 20 men from the Glendine and Letterkelly companies keeping watch for us.

The mistaken message sent along by the scouts, in my opinion, badly upset all our plans. It delayed the actual attack by about two hours and caused the ending of the ambush to coincide with the arrival on the scene, by the merest accident, of the military who came from Ennistymon. These troops were on the lookout for the Resident Magistrate, Captain Lindrum, who that day was due to arrive in Ennistymon, but, as it so happened, was taken prisoner while coming from his home in Kilrush by some of the Volunteers in the West Clare Brigade area at Caherfeenick, near Doonbeg. In the fighting which ensued after the ambush the I.R.A. leader, Ignatius O'Neill, was badly wounded and the I.R.A. party in effecting its escape got widely scattered. These two latter factors prevented measures being taken to deal with the widespread and ferocious reprisals which followed that night in Miltown-Malbay, Lahinch and Ennistymon. While engaged in these reprisals the enemy forces ran completely amuck and were, I believe, to a man hopelessly drunk and incapable of meeting any kind of a well-organised and determined attack. However,

this chance was lost, very much to my annoyance. Apart from O'Neill, the only other casualty sustained by the I.R.A. in the fighting after the Rineen ambush was one man wounded, Michael Curtin, Moy, Lahinch.

On the Sunday following the Rineen ambush, all the participants who were able to do so met at Hillback Lake armed with whatever equipment was available. A long discussion took place on the lessons which had been learned from our experiences there. A summary of our conclusions were sent to the Brigade Headquarters. I can't recall now the substance of that report.

The ambush had, so far as our battalion area was concerned, two very direct results. The enemy became more hostile and active, but he used large convoys when travelling. The people became very much embittered against him and adopted a more defiant attitude towards the military and Black and Tans. The women and the older people did not hesitate to show their feelings when they encountered these forces in the course of raids and searches. As far as the I.R.A. organisation itself went, the men became keener at their drill and showed more enthusiasm in the different duties which they were called upon to perform, e.g., road-cutting, scouting and dispatch carrying.

The opportunities to attack enemy forces lessened, however, due to the precautions which they now took in moving through the country. Except on very rare occasions, they travelled in formations which were too strong for our resources. The Battalion O/C. himself was incapacitated for several months after Rineen and this fact also did not improve matters. In December 1920 he resigned from the post due to some differences with the brigade staff. He was replaced by Seamus Hennessy, Cloneyogan, Lahinch, and in the reshuffling of posts on the staff of the 4th Battalion at that time the

following appointments were made which lasted until the truce:

Battalion Vice O/C.	-	myself
" Adjutant	-	Sean Burke
" Quartermaster	-	Steve Gallagher

On the night of our appointments the Battalion O/C. and myself came into Miltown-Malbay and seized the Co. Council Rate Books from the local rate collector; on the following day, the 1st Lieut. of the Miltown Company - David Murray - brought to my home the sum of £700 which had previously been lodged in the bank by the rate collector. From that time onwards I was given orders by the Brigade Headquarters that I would be responsible for the collection of the rates in the battalion area which then extended from Ennistymon to Miltown-Malbay including these two towns and eastwards to Inagh. Having regard to my other military duties at the time and the poor and dangerous facilities for travelling which then existed I had to work very hard to ensure that the rates did not fall into arrears and thus embarrass the Clare Co. Council which was engaged in a bitter struggle with the alien Department of Local Government which functioned from the Custom House in Dublin. I was assisted in this work by the local company captains and other officers and by the magnificent co-operation on the part of the general body of ratepayers.

Between January 1921 and 11th July 1921, I received in rates the total sum of £4,800, all of which was handed over by myself to the Brigade O/C., Frank Barrett, of course in instalments according as the amounts became large. I could not use the banks to keep the money so I had to resort to placing it in tins and boxes which I kept concealed in hedges in the neighbourhood of my own home. I am proud now to be able to say that every penny collected by way of rates in my area at that period was transmitted to my Brigade O/C. and that the amount of arrears was negligible.

While I was absent from the area on 31st March 1921, (as I had gone on a summons from the Brigade O/C. to deliver to him on that date all the rate moneys in my possession at Casey's in Kilmaley) an ambush took place in Milltown-Malbaw on that night in which one Black and Tan named Moore was killed and another wounded. Reprisals followed this in the course of a couple of days. Military and police rounded up the residents of the town and compelled them to witness the destruction by explosives of the draper's shop of John Sullivan, Main Street, and the private house of Morgan Hayes, Ennis Road. Both of these men were supporters of the independence movement.

In March 1921 and up to the truce, orders from Brigade H.Q. stressed very much the importance of road-cutting and the destruction of bridges as a means of harrassing the enemy. In that period I'm sure all the companies in the 4th Battalion were out two or three nights each week on this work. Lackelly Bridge was destroyed during the course of these operations by men from the Lackelly and Glendine companies.

On Ascension Thursday, 1921, I had charge of eight men armed with rifles at Toor Hill, near Lahinch, while another party, under the Battalion O/C., went on to the railway line about half a mile closer to the coast to raid the mails coming on the morning train to Miltown. Hennessy's party were armed with revolvers and shotguns. The main road from Lahinch to Miltown runs between Toor Hill and the railway line and my party were keeping an eye on a back road which also connected Lahinch and Miltown. Just as the train was approaching, the ~~other party~~ ^{British military} passed along the main road. Thinking he was being surrounded, the O/C. allowed the train to pass unmolested and the military, who were unaware that anything was afoot, continued on the journey.

In June 1921, under the Battalion O/C., I was one of a party of 16 men who met at Vaughan's Hill, Moughna, Lahinch,

to ambush a party of police who were expected to come to Tom Tuttle's, Moughna, to serve him with a juror's summons. After waiting from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. the police did not come along.

A week or so later in June 1921, the train to Miltown-Malbay was held up at Moy Bridge by a party of 25 men under Seamus Hennessy and two horse-loads of mails were removed from it, along with a quantity of suspected "Belfast goods". The seizures were brought to Marrinan's in Curraghadea, Lahinch. There the mails were censored. Nothing of importance was found, but all correspondence addressed to members of the British forces was destroyed. The remainder of the mail was brought to Dunsallagh Post Office by some members of the Moy and Letterkelly companies and it was delivered in due course to the addressees.

The last time in which I was concerned in an attempt to attack the enemy prior to the truce was at Monenaghna about the beginning of July 1921. This was to be a sniping operation and our party comprised eight or nine riflemen again under the control of the Battalion O/C. Monenaghna is three or four miles from Ennistymon on the main road to Ennis. At this time a convoy of from 12 to 20 lorries accompanied by an armed car was going between these two places a couple of times each week. Owing to its strength and the absence of any ground along the route which would be large enough to enable the I.R.A. to occupy positions favourable for attacking purposes, the Brigade O/C., with the approval of an officer from G.H.Q. who had come in person to the Mid-Clare area to see things for himself, gave orders to snipe this convoy as often as possible. On the day in question our party took up positions about 4 o'clock in the morning and we remained until around 1 o'clock in the evening. The rain came down in torrents and when we withdrew it was a

it was a question of absolute necessity as the entire party was exhausted from the long spell of waiting under the heavy downpour. In any event, the enemy always passed before noon and on that occasion did not actually travel. Our party marched back to Tuttle's of Moughna where a good meal put us all in better form. As the day dried up and the sun came out we decided to warm ourselves by having some drill. We spent some hours so engaged and when we finished I handed my rifle over to a young Volunteer and did not see it again until after the truce.

Signed: Anthony Malone
 (Anthony Malone)
 Date: 30.1.55

Witness: D. Griffin
 (D. Griffin)
 Investigator

