

ORIGINAL

W.S. 1505

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COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1505.

Witness

Eward Sisk,
Crosshaven,
Co. Cork.

Identity.

Captain, Carrigaline Company.
Battalion Vice O/C.

Subject.

Activities of Carrigaline Company, 9th Battalion,
Cork No. 1 Brigade, I.R.A., 1914-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

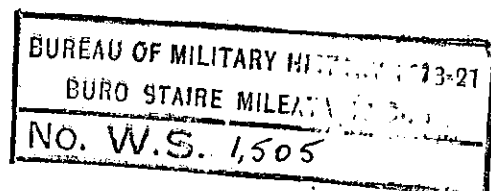
Nil.

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Form B.S.M. 2

ORIGINAL

STATEMENT OF EDWARD SISK,
Crosshaven, Co. Cork.



I was born in the townland of Crosshaven, County Cork, in the year 1896. I attended the local National School until I was 15 years of age. When I left school I went to work on my father's farm.

A Company of the National Volunteers was formed in the area in the year 1914. I became a member in the same year. I don't remember the organisers or who was in charge but we numbered about 100 and were drilled by ex-British soldiers. The Company ceased to exist after John Redmond advised the members to join the British Army. After this there was no company of Volunteers in the area until about January, 1920, when a company was formed in Carrigaline. Crosshaven from the start formed part of the Carrigaline Company. Our strength was about 60 men. I was elected Captain; John Barry, Carrigaline 1st Lieutenant and Edmund Cogan 2nd Lieutenant. A Tipperary man named J.J. Madden, who was 'on the run' at the time, was a Sinn Féin organiser for South-East Cork around this time. It was he who organised the Volunteers in the area. Soon after the formation of the Company we collected a large number of shotguns in the Company area. In a few cases we had to raid certain houses for the guns where the occupants were hostile. Around the same time we received a rifle and 200 rounds of .303 ammunition from a soldier stationed at Templebreedy Fort.

A short time after the formation of the Company the local R.I.C. barracks at Crosshaven was evacuated by the garrison who went to Fort Camden which had a military garrison. About a week later members of Cork City I.R.A. Battalion arrived one night and burned down the evacuated barracks. We knew nothing about it until it was over. The City I.R.A. were not aware that a Company existed in our area due

to the fact that we had been organised by a man outside Cork City Brigade area. Our only activities consisted in the collection of arms and, as far as I am aware, we were an isolated Company and unconnected officially with any Battalion or Cork No. 1. Brigade. It was not until May 1920 that a Battalion was officially formed for the area. We of Carrigaline or "E" Company then became one of nine Companies which composed the newly formed Battalion which became the 9th Battalion of Cork No. 1. Brigade. The following Companies made up the Battalion :- A. - Rochestown; B. - Passage; C. - Monkstown; D.- Shanbally; E. - Carrigaline; F. - Ballygarvin; G. - Ballinhassig; H. - Kinsale and I. - Tracton. I would say that the strength of the Battalion then was 400 men. Richard O'Mahony became Battalion O/C., Denis Lordan became Vice-O/C., Henry O'Mahony Adjutant and John Barrett Quartermaster.

In August, 1920, the Battalion O/C. prepared an ambush for a military patrol from Fort Camden which patrolled Crosshaven village every night. The patrol numbered eight or ten men headed by one of the R.I.C. who had evacuated the local barracks. The attacking party consisted of twenty-two men - mostly the officers of the various Companies within the Battalion - and were armed with six rifles, shotguns and revolvers. O'Mahony selected a spot on the main Carrigaline Crosshaven road and took up a position at 9 p.m. in extended formation on one side of the road to await the customary patrol. Through a leakage of information the military became aware we were waiting for them. It appears that a local friendly publican, who was aware of our intentions, advised his customers to go home early, with the result that the military came out in force that night taking a different route to the one usually taken. I would like to point out that Crosshaven was and still is a very well favoured seaside resort for visitors from Cork City and elsewhere and in the

month of August, 1920. was packed with visitors. We, however, remained in position until nearly 1 a.m. The military went round the cliffs from Fort Camden to Templebreedy and returned by the same route, avoiding the ambush position completely. When 1 a.m. arrived O'Mahony dismissed his party, so we returned to our homes: A couple of weeks later in the month of September, with other members of the Company, we burned down an R.I.C. barracks in the village of Carrigaline which had been vacated some time earlier.

In the month of October the military and Police were very active raiding and searching houses in the area including my own, but failed to find anything of military importance. During the month of November we again raided for arms, this time raiding especially the homes of people considered hostile or unfriendly. In these raids we secured twenty shotguns, three revolvers, six .22 rifles, one Peter-the-Painter, a number of shotgun cartridges, about thirty rounds of revolver ammunition and eight rounds of ammunition for the Peter-the-Painter.

Early in December my house was again raided but I managed to escape. Next day the house was again surrounded but I was not at home at the time. From then onwards I went 'on the run'. A large number of the men of the Battalion were 'on the run' by this time and several had been arrested including William O'Connell, Captain of Passage, James Walsh, Captain of Ballygarvan and Michael Roche, Captain of Kinsale.

Activities in the Company area were few during the Christmas period of 1920, and were mostly confined to the seizure or destruction of enemy goods such as petrol. Near Templebreedy Fort we came upon a number of drums of petrol which we emptied.

Around January, 1921, the Battalion O/C. received an order from the Brigade O/C., Seán Hegarty, to collect an arms levy from all the well-to-do people of the area. In this Company area we collected about £200. The people were told that the money was being collected in lieu of the Income Tax which they had been advised by I.R.A. not to pay to the enemy.

In the month of January, 1921, Denis Lordan, the Vice O/C., returned to his native West Cork to join up with the West Cork Brigade. I was appointed Vice O/C. in his place, James Barrett became Battalion Adjutant and Seán Hyde Quartermaster at the same meeting. At that time the strength of the Battalion on paper was approximately 600 men. We then had approximately twelve rifles, some of which were defective, a large number of shotguns and some revolvers in the Battalion. After my appointment I was ordered by the O/C - Richard O'Mahony - to take charge of the eastern half of the Battalion. He took charge of the western half.

On the 1st February, 1921, Richard O'Mahony, in charge of about sixteen members of Ballinhassig Company, took up ambush positions to attack an R.I.C. patrol of six or seven men near the village. After waiting for two days for the patrol to appear O'Mahony had to leave the attacking party. On the third day while the party were in charge of their Company Captain, Michael Walsh, the patrol came along and walked into the ambush position. Walsh and his party opened fire killing two R.I.C. and wounding one. The remainder of the patrol made good their escape along the River Onabhuide. The attacking party were armed with rifles and shotguns. Military from Ballincollig and Kinsale and R.I.C. and Tans from Ballinhassig and Cork City subsequently raided the countryside, threatening everyone and shooting indiscriminately.

In the following month members of Kinsale, Ballinhassig and Tracton Companies, in charge of the Battalion O/C., waited in ambush for a military patrol outside the town of Kinsale at a crossroads near the workhouse, a short distance from the town, but the ambush did not materialise as the patrol did not turn up.

Early in March, 1921, we received information that a patrol of R.I.C. and Tans were to proceed from Passage R.I.C. Barracks to Rochestown railway station to meet and escort a District Inspector of the R.I.C. who intended to get off a train at the station of Rochestown instead of remaining on the train until he reached Passage. I collected sixteen men from Passage and Rochestown Companies and, armed with shotguns and revolvers, took up ambush positions in extended formation on a bank of high ground on one side of the road about half a mile outside Passage on the way to Rochestown. The road itself was running parallel to the River Lee. The bank of high ground was very steep. At a given signal we opened fire as the head of the patrol came into the ambush position. The patrol was in extended order of twos and threes and were so extended that the men in the rear did not come into the ambush position. After our first volley those in front immediately took cover below us under the high bank of earth and from this position returned our fire; while those of the patrol in the rear retreated back to Passage. Spasmodic shooting continued for three quarters of an hour until I decided to retreat as Cork military barracks was only a twenty minutes run to our positions; while those of the R.I.C. and Tans who remained were still putting up a fight. In the fight one R.I.C. was killed and two were wounded. We had ~~EXP~~ected a patrol of about eight men but on this occasion at least sixteen men made up the patrol. We suffered no casualties.

In late April and early May, road trenching and destruction of bridges was carried out throughout the Battalion area. Other activities included raids on mails in the various company areas. Food supplies for the enemy sent by rail to the military forts of Camden and Templebreedy were seized from time to time and sold for Brigade funds. Coal for the enemy was also diverted. In the case of the coal the loaded trucks were moved to high embankments and dumped down the railway siding from which the general public helped themselves.

During the Truce I attended a Battalion training camp at Carrigaline and took part in the taking over of Passage R.I.C. barracks which then became the Headquarters of the Battalion.

SIGNED: Edward Lisk

DATE: 2nd October 1956

WITNESS: John J. Doherty

