

**ORIGINAL**

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRÉ MILÉATA 1913-21

NO. W.S. 1,762

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1,762.

**Witness**

Colonel J. V. Joyce,  
Beggar's Bush Barracks,  
Dublin.

**Identity.**

O/C, University College Company, I. V. ;  
O/C, 'C' Company, 4th Battalion, I. R. A.

**Subject.**

The Squad, G. H. G., Intelligence & Active  
Service Unit, 1920-1921.

**Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.**

Nil.

File No S. 271.

Form B.S.M. 2

# ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
BUREAU STAIRS MILITARY 1913-21  
No. W.S. 1762

STATEMENT BY COLONEL J.V. JOYCE,

Beggar's Bush Barracks, Dublin.

The following information in regard to "The Squad", "G.H.Q. Intelligence Staff" and "The Active Service Unit" was compiled by me following consultations which I had over a period of years in my capacity as Chief of the Investigation Staff of the Bureau, with officers and members of these units: -

### THE SQUAD.

From statements to hand, the Squad may be defined as a Special Unit formed by the Director of Intelligence, Michael Collins, for special duties decided on by him and to deal with enemy agents, spies and informers. It operated directly under his own particular direction and was solely responsible to him. Its activities were not, however, strictly limited to the liquidation of spies and informers. On occasions it took part in other military operations in conjunction with units of the Dublin Brigade such as, for example, the burning of the Custom House. Starting with a numerical strength of four, it was increased from time to time but never exceeded twenty. Some members, however, claim that it never numbered more than twelve and for this reason its personnel became known as "The Twelve Apostles".

### G. H. Q. INTELLIGENCE STAFF.

When Michael Collins became Director of Intelligence, a G.H.Q. Intelligence Staff was formed to work under his personal direction. Initially, it consisted of a small number of men, some of whom had experience of Intelligence

work with units of the Dublin Brigade, and as suitable men became available the staff was increased. In short, its chief functions were Intelligence. This involved generally the procurement of information regarding enemy activities and the tracking down of agents, spies and suspects. When dealing with such individuals, the Intelligence Staff worked in close conjunction with the Squad. When an execution of a spy or informer was ordered, a member of the Intelligence staff invariably accompanied the members of the Squad detailed to carry out the execution, the idea being to ensure the identity of the individual concerned.

#### THE ACTIVE SERVICE UNIT.

In December, 1920, an Active Service Unit was formed to operate under the orders of the Officer Commanding, the Dublin Brigade. Its personnel were drawn from the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Battalions, each Battalion supplying a section of approximately twelve strong. Like the Squad and the Intelligence Staff, these men were employed full time on active service work and, as they were taken from their normal employment, they were paid for their military services. The main purpose of this unit was to harass and ambush Crown Forces whenever the opportunity arose, and once the unit was established street ambushes became almost continuous daily occurrences. Generally each section operated in its own Battalion area, but there were times when the unit operated as a whole, such as the burning of the Custom House.

Names of Members of the Units referred to.THE SQUAD.

- |     |               |                  |
|-----|---------------|------------------|
| 1.  | Ben Byrne.    |                  |
| 2.  | Jim Conroy.   | <u>Deceased.</u> |
| 3.  | W. Stapleton. |                  |
| 4.  | J. Slattery.  | 1. Eddie Byrne.  |
| 5.  | P. Daly.      | 2. Tom Keogh.    |
| 6.  | J. Leonard.   | 3. Seán Doyle.   |
| 7.  | M. Kennedy.   | 4. M. Reilly.    |
| 8.  | F. Bolster.   | 5. L. Murray.    |
| 9.  | J. Dunne.     | 6. P. Griffin.   |
| 10. | J. Byrne.     | 7. Ben Barrett.  |
| 11. | P. Lawson.    | 8. R. Murphy.    |
| 12. | I. McKenna.   |                  |
| 13. | V. Byrne.     |                  |
| 14. | D. Hannon.    |                  |
| 15. | Sam Robinson. |                  |
| 16. | M. McEvoy.    |                  |

G. H. Q. INTELLIGENCE STAFF.

- |     |                  |                    |
|-----|------------------|--------------------|
| 1.  | Liam Tobin.      |                    |
| 2.  | Frank Thornton.  |                    |
| 3.  | Joe Guilfoyle.   |                    |
| 4.  | Chas. Dalton.    |                    |
| 5.  | D. McDonnell.    |                    |
| 6.  | Ned Kelliher.    | <u>Deceased.</u>   |
| 7.  | C. Byrne.        |                    |
| 8.  | Frank Saurin.    | 1. Tom Cullen.     |
| 9.  | P. Kennedy.      | 2. P. McGee.       |
| 10. | Seán Tumbleton.  | 3. Jim Murray (?). |
| 11. | Joe Kavanagh.    |                    |
| 12. | Sweeny Newell.   |                    |
| 13. | Con O'Neill.     |                    |
| 14. | Alf. O'Neill.    |                    |
| 15. | Joe Shanahan.    |                    |
| 16. | Paddy Caldwell.  |                    |
| 17. | Geo. Fitzgerald. |                    |
| 18. | Jim Hughes.      |                    |
| 19. | Martin Hoare.    |                    |
| 20. | Jack Walshe.     |                    |
| 21. | Jerry Condon.    |                    |
| 22. | Joe Dolan.       |                    |

ACTIVE SERVICE UNIT.No. 1 Section.

- |     |                |                  |
|-----|----------------|------------------|
| 1.  | D. O'Sullivan. |                  |
| 2.  | C. Quinn.      | <u>Deceased.</u> |
| 3.  | I. Flood.      | 1. Frank Flood.  |
| 4.  | P. O'Connor.   | 2. I. Ryan.      |
| 5.  | J. Foy.        | 3. B. Ryan.      |
| 6.  | J. Sliney.     | 4. P. Doyle.     |
| 7.  | E. Breslin.    | 5. M. McGee.     |
| 8.  | S. Burke.      | 6. C. O'Malley.  |
| 9.  | C. Maxwell.    | 7. M. Dunne.     |
| 10. | P. Ratcliffe.  |                  |
| 11. | Jim Kerrigan.  |                  |

ACTIVE SERVICE UNIT.No. 2 Section.

1. I. McGrath.
2. G. Gray.
3. J. Heery.
4. J. Gilhooly.
5. P. Evers.
6. J. Cahill.
7. J. Muldooney.
8. C. Fitzsimons.
9. Bob Purcell.
10. Joe Gillan.
11. P. Drury.
12. J. Caffrey.
13. Bill Gannon.

No. 3 Section.

1. J. Gibbons.
2. G. White.
3. M. White.
4. J. Browne.
5. Phil Quinn.
6. C. Downey.
7. F. Downey.
8. J. Dolan.
9. M. Dowling.
10. J. Hanlon.
11. P. Brunton.
12. J. Doyle.
13. D. Jervins.
14. Joe Carroll.
15. Bill Corry.

Deceased.

1. Bill Philips.
2. M. Stapleton.
3. P. Larkin.
4. Leo Fitzgerald.
5. P. Morrissey.
6. M. Kerrigan.
7. P. Flanagan.

No. 4 Section.

1. Jim McGuinness.
2. J. McGuinness.
3. P. O'Connor.
4. P. Rigney.
5. J. Tully.
6. I. Lillis.
7. P. Mullen.
8. G. Nolan.
9. P. Collins.
10. J. Harpur.
11. M. Walshe.
12. I. Leigh.
13. M. Stack.
14. Simon McEnerney.

Deceased.

1. M. Sweeney.
2. Gus Murphy.
3. A. O'Toole.

Signed:  Colonel.  
(J.V. Joyce)

Witness:   
(P.J. Brennan)

Date: 18th February, 1959.

Secretary, Bureau of Military History,  
1913-1921.

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