

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRS MILEATA 1913-21
NO. W.S. 1716

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 716.

Witness

General Seán MacBain,
"Cloncoose",
Stillorgan Road,
Donnybrook,
Dublin.

Identity.

Brigade Director of Operations;
O/C North Longford A.S.U.;
Member of Dáil Éireann;
Cabinet Minister.

Subject.

I.R.A. activities, Longford, 1917-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil.

File No S. 557.

Form B.S.M. 2

McNally was only slightly wounded. Matt Brady was severely wounded in three places. Two bullets shattered his leg, having entered on the inside, and blowing half the femur away on the outside, shattering the whole leg from nearly the knee to the hip. He was shot through the arm in two places, and, what appeared to be the most serious of all, one bullet entered half an inch below his left nipple, with an exit wound directly opposite, in his back. Priest and doctors were hurriedly mobilised. The doctors declared that he had a short time to live, that he was shot through the pericardium.

Brady was still alive an hour afterwards, although the doctors had declared that he had only a short time to live. His mother and sister had arrived from Gelsha, about three miles distant. All believed that he was dying, but still there was no blood coming from his mouth or nose, and he was shouting very vigorously with pain.

I came to the conclusion that there was a chance of saving his life, and I enquired from those around if they knew of any doctor who had experience of gunshot wounds in the British army, or who had been through the 1914-1918 war. I was informed that there was a Major Douglas in Killeshandra, who was a doctor and surgeon, and that he was home on leave at the time. I sent two Volunteers, whose names I cannot now recall, with a driver, to call on Dr. Douglas in Killeshandra. They were to tell him that Lord Farnham had had a serious motor accident some distance out on the road, and that he was to come at once and bring his medical and surgical outfit with him, as the patient was in a serious condition. Major Douglas hustled. He brought out his

bag, got into the car, and they set off for the scene of Lord Parnham's accident, which was non-existent. After some time, he began to get uneasy, and challenged his escort as to where the accident had happened. He was told to calm down. Eventually, he arrived safely at Smith's of Rathmore where Matt Brady lay, wounded and still alive.

I met Dr. Douglas - he was highly indignant at our conduct - and I explained to him why he had been brought, that he was regarded as the only one with experience of bullet wounds, that this Volunteer officer had been seriously wounded, and that I now asked him, in the interest of suffering humanity, to do what he could for him.

Dr. Douglas made a careful examination of the wounded man, and then declared that the wounds in his hip were serious ones and likely to be the cause of his death, that the breast wound was of no importance, as he was fortunate enough to have what was known as a pigeon chest and the bullet had entered at a point where it was deflected around his rib and around directly at the back, causing only a slight flesh wound, but that the leg was really serious and should have been attended to hours ago, and that an immediate operation was necessary.

It was then decided to send for Dr. Mayne, the surgeon in Longford, and to get an ambulance sent out for him. I decided that Longford Hospital was the only place where I could have Brady treated, in view of the necessity for urgent treatment. Dr. Douglas was kind enough to say that he would remain until Dr. Mayne arrived, which he did. When Dr. Mayne arrived, they had a consultation, and I overheard

Douglas advising Mayne as to the nature of the operation. They put on temporary splints and dressed the wounds. Then a British army ambulance arrived, accompanied by a British army doctor and four Red Cross orderlies.

When the army doctor dismounted from the covered lorry with a red cross on the sides and ends, he put his hands up, and declared that he was there in the interests of suffering humanity, and that his uniform was not to be regarded as hostile. Dr. Mayne then explained that, as he had no ambulance, he had rung up the O/C, Longford, for the loan of the ambulance and some orderlies. I took this as a reasonable explanation. Anyway, no other ambulance was available. When Brady was moved on to a stretcher and carried to the ambulance by the Red Cross orderlies, there was considerable hostility to this move. So I decided that I would insist on travelling on the ambulance with Brady to the hospital. The officer at first objected, but I insisted, and explained that, if Brady should die on the road or anything happened, he would find it extremely difficult to prove that he had not been killed by them. At this, he consented.

I accompanied Brady on the ambulance to Longford County Hospital, and saw Brady safely in bed, in the care of nurses and Dr. Mayne. I am not sure whether Dr. Douglas came to Longford to assist at the operation, or not, but I have a half-notion that he did. I asked Dr. Mayne to let me know if there was any attempt to arrest Brady. This, he refused to do, but said that he knew that T.W. Delaney, the Crown Solicitor, was a friend of mine, that he would tell him, and that Delaney might do as he pleased.