

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 32



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Telefón 61018.

ROINN COSANTA.

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

(Bureau of Military History 1913-21).

26 RADDH NA NIARTHARACH,
(26 Westland Row),

BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH.
(Dublin).

DOCUMENT W.S.32

Statement by

Florence Begley,
South Main St.,
Bandon,
Co. Cork.

Dated 13th October, 1947

On Bandon, Co. Cork, Coy. I.V.
1913-1916

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BURO STAIRS-MILITA 1913-21

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STATEMENT OF FLORENCE BEGLEY,
SOUTH MAIN STREET, BANDON,
CO. CORK.

PERIOD: DECEMBER 1913 TO MAY 1916.

UNIT: BANDON COMPANY, I.V.

There was no Fianna or I.R.B. organisation in Bandon before Easter, 1916.

The Volunteers started in the town at the end of 1913. They were almost entirely composed of supporters of the Irish Parliamentary Party and had a strength of approximately 200. There was a Committee in charge, and a room was taken in the old Dispensary, off Shandon Street. The Officers were:-

Chairman: Dan McCarthy.
Treasurer: Tim Coffey.
Secretary: Patrick Howard.

Some members of the Committee were:- Patrick Sheehan, Thomas White, John McSweeney, Jeremiah Carroll.

After the split in the organisation all over the country the Bandon Company was depleted by enlistments in the British Army, and in a short time the Company ceased to be active and gradually faded out. The room in the Dispensary continued to be used, but mainly for social purposes.

The few of us who had not followed Redmond's leadership continued to frequent the room and as the interest of the others diminished we organised a small group there to re-start the Irish Volunteers. Pat Dwyer and I kept contact with the Ballinadee Company from early 1915. We used to attend their Sunday parades and route marches, and when we had about twelve Volunteers in Bandon we became a section of the Ballinadee Company. Bandon registered as a Company in 1915; we had then about fifteen members. There was no Committee; Pat Dwyer was elected Captain and William Buckley 1st Lieutenant.

We did our own training on week nights, and on Sundays we usually joined with the Ballinadee Company in their exercises. We were at the big parade in Clonakilty and the exercises at Ardfield in March, 1915, and we were at the St. Patrick's Day parade in Cork in 1916.

Terence MacSwiney attended a meeting of Officers held in Bandon on Holy Thursday night, 1916. There was some other Officer with him, but I do not remember who it was. The following Companies were represented at the meeting:- Ballinadee, Bandon, Kilpatrick, Gaggin, Lyre and Tinkers' Cross. MacSwiney made it pretty plain to the meeting that the forthcoming parade on Easter Sunday was to be something more than the usual week-end exercise, and that the hour of action had come.

The notice for the Easter Sunday parade was put up in the room in the Dispensary in the same way as the usual notices for parades were displayed. It was up about a week, as I think we were told on the previous Sunday at a parade in Ballinadee that there would be a two-day exercise commencing on Easter Sunday. Our instructions were to meet the Ballinadee Company at the Bridge in Bandon at 8.30 a.m. on Easter Sunday, to bring all available arms and equipment and rations for two days.

Six men from Bandon paraded on Easter Sunday, viz: Pat Dwyer, William Buckley, Tom O'Driscoll, Patrick Desmond, my brother Joseph Begley, and myself. Our arms consisted of one .22 miniature rifle and four shot guns. I was unarmed and had a bicycle. We met the Ballinadee Company at the Bridge in Bandon at 8.30 a.m. We were then told we were going to Macroom, but were not given any further information. Sergeant Deegan, R.I.C., was waiting on the Bridge at Bandon when we arrived and he accompanied the column to Farrnivane, where Sergeant Lawless, R.I.C., took over from him and accompanied us to Kilmurray - the next R.I.C. station on the route. I don't know if an R.I.C. observer came with us from Kilmurray to Macroom.

There were a number of other men with bicycles and we acted as scouts for the column on the march.

Clogough and Kilpatrick Companies joined us at Gurteen cross roads. We got Mass - or a part of Mass - at Kilmurray and the Cork City contingent met us there. The whole force then marched to Macroom. We were dismissed there for an hour. The day got very wet and an announcement was made that the parade was cancelled. I had seen Terence MacSwiney and Bob Hales at the Bridge, east of Macroom, as we marched in.

We travelled by train from Macroom to Crookstown on Sunday evening and as it was still very wet we went to the village and remained there until 4 or 5 a.m. on Monday when the weather improved. The march to Bandon was then resumed and we arrived there about 8 a.m.

On Easter Monday we learned that the Ballinadee Company was standing-to and we made arrangements to be available for duty, but no orders came to us from anywhere during the week.

The Company Captain, Pat Dwyer, was arrested on Friday, 5th May. On Monday, 8th, Thomas O'Driscoll, Roundhill, Patrick Desmond, Ballyhandle, Upton (then resident in Bandon and a member of the Bandon Company), my brother, Joseph Begley, and myself were arrested. Joseph and I were taken to Cork Jail. On the following day we were taken with other prisoners to Richmond Barracks, Dublin. I was released there, being under 18 years of age.

A large section of the population of Bandon was very hostile to the Volunteers, particularly the residents of Irishtown on the Eastern side of the town. Many of them were, of course, relatives of men serving in the British forces and at that time drawing separation allowances. Their hostility was not directed so much against the few Volunteers in the town itself as against the Ballinadee Company. They availed of every opportunity to jeer at, insult and attack the Ballinadee men, even lying in ambush on the roads leading to the town for the purpose of attacking them with

stones and other missiles. When the Ballinadee Company returned to Bandon by train from Cork after the St. Patrick's Day procession there, a particularly vicious attack was made on them with stones and mud by this gang of Bandon toughs. The order to fix bayonets was given and a few rounds fired over the heads of the mob before they dispersed. The Ballinadee Company had frequently obstructed recruiting meetings, and on one occasion a recruiting meeting about to be held in Bandon was abandoned when it was learned that the Ballinadee Company was approaching.

SIGNED: Y. Deely

DATE: 10th Oct. 1944

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WITNESS: Flavence Donoghue