

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

NO. W.S. 39



ÉIRE

Telefón 61018

ROINN COSANTA.

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

(Bureau of Military History 1913-21).

26 RAEDH NA NIARTHARACH,  
(26 Westland Row),

BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH  
(Dublin)

DOCUMENT W.S.39.

Statement by

Eamonn Ahern,  
Castlequarter,  
Dungourney,  
Co. Cork.

Dated: 21st October, 1947.

On: Dungourney Coy. I.V.  
1915-1916.

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BUREAU CENTRAL	101 W 1512-01
BUREAU STAIRS	101 W 1512-01
NO. W.S.	39

STATEMENT OF EAMONN AHERN, M.C.C.,  
CASTLEQUARTER, DUNGOURNEY, CO. CORK.

PERIOD: OCTOBER 1915 TO MAY 1916.

UNIT: DUNGOURNEY COMPANY, I.V.

The Dungourney Company of the Irish Volunteers was formed at a meeting held in Dungourney in October, 1915. The districts included in the Company Area were Dungourney, Clonmult and Ballynoe. The district was strongly O'Brienite at the time, and there had never been any National Volunteer organisation in it, although they had a strong Company at Mogeely. There was a good national spirit in the district. Gaelic League classes were in progress for many years. Seán Ó Tuama of Cork taught Irish classes here. There was a very G.A.A. Club also.

The immediate circumstances which gave rise to the formation of the Company were that Tom and David Kent of Castlelyons came to Dungourney on a Sunday in October, 1915. They were both in Volunteer uniform. They had been in Clonmult but had failed to make contact there.

I met them before Mass and told them that a British recruiting meeting was to be held after Mass that day. Action was quickly decided upon. I got five or six of the local lads to go through the congregation and ask the men to assemble at the Tallow side of the village after Mass. About 100 men, young and old, assembled. We put them in fours and told them what we proposed to do. They were instructed that they were to hold their formation whatever happened and not break ranks. I went down to the village to see if the recruiting meeting was on - It was. Captain Donnellan, Major Hallinan and a few other speakers from Cork were present. There were no military or police.

I went back and we then marched our body of men right through the meeting. When Captain Donnellan saw us coming, he said, "Here are our boys"; he thought we were National Volunteers from Mogeely. We marched on to the end of the village, then turned about and marched back. When we got back in a few minutes the meeting had broken up and the people scattered. Captain Donnellan went to the Parish Priest. We then adjourned to an old library building on the Mount Uniacke road, where we held a meeting and decided to form a Company of Volunteers. I was Chairman of the meeting and Tom and David Kent were present. A Committee of twelve was appointed, of which I was elected Chairman. About 100 men nominally joined the Company and about 60 of these became active members.

Next day the D.I. of the R.I.C. came to me and enquired if I had any knowledge of what happened in the village on the previous day. I said that it was his business to find out. Extensive enquiries were made in the village and neighbourhood, but the police were unable to get any names and no action was taken. At the recruiting meeting Captain Donnellan had been quoting the numbers of men who had joined the British forces from various districts around. An old man in the audience, named Barry, remarked, "The more the fools they are". The police endeavoured

to trace who had made this remark, but without success.

The Company immediately got down to serious work and training. The Committee met weekly and a parade was held every week. My brother, Maurice Ahern, was appointed Company Captain and I acted as Secretary. There were no other Officers, and there were no changes down to Easter, 1916.

The Company took part in efforts to organise and recruit for the Volunteers in neighbouring districts. We paraded at a meeting in Lisgoold where Tom Kent, Terence MacSwiney and Seán Nolan spoke. We had a Sunday parade to Inch also for the same purpose.

The Company Captain, Maurice Ahern, and Martin O'Keeffe of Ballynoe attended the Course for Officers conducted by Captain J.J. O'Connell at the Volunteer Hall in Sheares' Street in January, 1916.

About 60 men from the Company took part in the St. Patrick's Day parade in Cork in 1916. Only some of them were armed at that time. The men paid a weekly subscription, and out of this fund we purchased haversacks, belts and bandoliers. Most of the Company were equipped in this way at Easter, 1916.

*Receipt for  
equipment  
can be seen  
at Nat. Museum  
Cork*

On Wednesday of Holy Week Fred Murray of Cork came to Castlequarter with the orders for Easter Sunday, 1916. He brought the orders orally, but also left a note of them signed by himself. I met him. The orders were that the Company was to go to Cork to the Volunteer Hall on Easter Sunday evening with all arms and equipment. We were to go prepared for action. Nothing was said about rations, as far as I remember, nor of how long we would be away, nor of the purpose of the mobilisation. We had no idea of what was intended. The whole Company was notified.

I went to Cork on Saturday morning. I went to the Volunteer Hall in Sheares' Street. There I saw, first, Taóg Barry and afterwards Tomás MacCurtain and Terence MacSwiney. Cartridges were being loaded with buckshot in the Hall. I wanted to arrange for billets for Dungourney Company and I spoke to Tomás and Terry about this. They enquired how many men were coming. I was not sure and said perhaps up to 30. They said they would get in straw and the Company could billet in the Hall.

Before leaving home I had arranged to send a telegram to my brother, Maurice Ahern, the Company Captain. I sent it off from Cork between 11 and 12 o'clock. "Send on the cattle" and signed it "John McCarthy". I then returned by train to Mogeely Station and met the Company there. There was no R.I.C. barrack at Dungourney. It was in the Mogeely district and Sergeant Gilroy was then the Sergeant in charge there. He and Constable Lee were at the station. Lee was a bit aggressive and wanted to know where the Volunteers were going. The Sergeant pulled Lee away. Gilroy was always friendly. He told me, after our first meeting in Dungourney, that police from his station should have been present at the recruiting meeting but that he had not got instructions in time, and his authorities had not been able to prove that he failed in his duty after receiving instructions.

The Company travelled to Cork by train from Mogeely Station, arriving in Cork about 8.30 p.m. They were met at Cork by two City Volunteers who took them via Oliver Plunket Street (then Old George's Street) to the Volunteer Hall. The Ballynoe and Clonmult men had cycled in and left their bicycles in Dungourney.

The following paraded:- (27)

Captain:	Maurice Ahern,	Castlequarter.
	Michael (Mac) Sullivan,	Dungourney.
	Padraig Mulcahy,	"
	Timothy Mulcahy,	"
	Jack Flanagan,	"
	John Stanton,	"
	Tim McCarthy,	"
	Mick McCarthy,	"
	John Murphy,	"
	Tim Lynch,	"
	Pa Moore,	"
	Jim Colbert,	"
	Tol Hurley,	"
	Mick Hennessy,	Clonmult.
	Mick Carey,	"
	John Lawton,	"
	John O'Mahony,	"
	Tim Mulcahy (Yank),	"
	Pat Geaney,	"
	Tom Cronin,	"
	Willie Foley (Cuddy),	"
	Pat Knowles,	"
	Martin O'Keefe,	Ballynoe.
	David O'Sullivan,	"
	Peter O'Callaghan,	"
	Timothy Hurley,	"
	Seán Hennessy,	"

The arms in the Company at Easter, 1916, were:-

One rifle .297250 with a small quantity of ammunition.  
Forty shot guns, with about 20 rounds each.  
Two revolvers, with a small quantity of ammunition.  
Twenty pikes, made locally.  
We had no explosives.

The shot guns were owned by the men themselves, or were on loan from local farmers. The arms actually taken to Cork on Easter Saturday were the rifle, the two revolvers, and about 26 shot guns.

The Company went to Mass at St. Francis, Liberty Street, on Sunday morning and afterwards paraded with the Cork City Companies, took the train to Crookstown and marched to Macroom. They were not then in possession of any further information as to the intentions of the Brigade Officers, or the purpose of the parade. It was only when they saw so many of the Cork Volunteers going to Holy Communion on Sunday morning that they began to suspect something unusual was on.

*Crookstown*

When the parade was dismissed in ~~Macroom~~ the Company returned to Cork by train, and travelled back to Mogeely by train also the same evening. Some of the Dungourney lads had gone into Mullaney's public house, opposite Glanmire Railway Station, while waiting for their train. They were caught there by the police, and, in the subsequent prosecutions, the police said they were not travellers because they (the police) were aware that the men had slept in Cork the previous night.

No order came to the Company during Easter Week. At the end of that week, or the beginning of the next week, Sergeant Gilroy sent Maurice Donovan <sup>Ladybridge</sup> to dis to warn my brother Maurice that he would be arrested on a particular night. Maurice left home but the raid did not take place that night. Next day Sergeant Gilroy came himself and told me the order had been cancelled but that a raid would be made later and he may not know the date. A few days later police, under an Inspector and Head Constable, raided for Maurice. They threatened to arrest me if he was not available, but they did not do so.

About two weeks later Maurice came back and was later arrested at home. He was taken to Cork and subsequently to Wakefield. There were no other arrests in the Company Area.

Men were interrogated in connection with arms, and efforts were made by the police to get arms surrendered to them, though no actual searches for arms were made. James Kelleher was approached by the police in this way and told that the only way he could save himself from arrest and internment was to hand in the arms. He collected twelve or more shot guns and handed them in at Ballynoe R.I.C. Barracks. These were the only arms surrendered in the Company area.

There was no Fianna or I.R.B. organisations in the area before 1916.

SIGNED:

*Pamona O'Brien*

DATE:

*Oct 21<sup>st</sup> 1947*

WITNESS:

*Fluence Donoghue*

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*They were searched the Cot in which my 4 mths old son Liam was sleeping*