

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21

NO. W.S. 61



ÉIRE

Telefón 61018.

ROINN COSANTA.

BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21

(Bureau of Military History 1913-21),

26 RAEDH NA NIARTHARACH,
(26 Westland Row),

BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH.
(Dublin).

DOCUMENT W.S. 61

Statement by

James Harte,
Ryefield, Whitechurch,
Co. Cork.

Dated: 30th October, 1947.

On: Whitechurch Coy. I.V.
1916.

3 pp. typescript - foolscap.

File No. S.444.

ORIGINAL

W.S. 61
BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BUREAU STAIRS MILITARY 1913-21

No. W.S. 61

STATEMENT OF JAMES HARTE, RYEFIELD, WHITECHURCH,
CO. CORK.

PERIOD: FEBRUARY, 1916, TO MAY, 1916.

UNIT: WHITECHURCH COMPANY, I.V.

On the last or the second last Sunday in February, 1915, Tomás MacCurtain; Eamonn Lynch and Harry Varien from Cork came to Whitechurch. Tomás MacCurtain spoke at a public meeting held after Mass for the formation of a Company of Volunteers. About twenty joined and the Company was formed that day. Harry Varien put us through some drill. I was elected Company Captain and continued to hold that position; no other Officer was elected before Easter, 1916.

From the start we held a parade one night each week and every Sunday up to Easter. Pa Twomey, Kilmona, came every week to drill us, and I attended weekly at a meeting of the Brigade Council held in Cork. We paid 3d. a week into a Company fund to get equipment, and we had got some belts, haversacks and bandoliers by Easter. There were no uniforms in the Company.

On Thursday of Holy Week, 1916, I was in Cork and met Tomás MacCurtain. He gave me the orders for the parade on Easter Sunday. He told me we were to march to Bweeing with all arms and equipment and rations for three days. We were to join Pa Twomey's Company at Kilmona on the way. He gave me no information about what was on, and did not say anything about a Rising or about arms.

Every member of the Company was notified of the parade, and the following fifteen assembled at Whitechurch after 8.30 a.m. Mass on Easter Sunday :-

James Harte.
Philip Mulcahy.
Daniel Sheehan.
Daniel P. Sullivan.
William Walsh.
Michael O'Reilly (afterwards Fr. Dermott, O.S.F.C.).
John O'Connell.
Thomas Joyce.
Jeremiah Regan.
Edmond Regan.
Michael Mahony.
Michael McCarthy.
David Coleman.
Thomas Crowley.
William McCarthy.

Michael Mulcahy also would have gone with us but was excused as an aunt of his had died in Blarney.

The arms which we had that day were:-

Eight shot guns with 24 rounds, none of which
had been loaded with slug.

One .22 revolver with about 10 rounds.

One .32 revolver with about 10 rounds.

One .45 revolver with about 10 rounds.

Some men were unarmed. The shot guns were the property of local farmers, given to us on loan. I had got one revolver from Tomas MacCurtain, one man had bought a revolver himself, and the third had been procured somewhere by another member of the Company.

We marched 3 miles to Kilmona, joined the Kilmona Company there and then marched the 12 miles to Bweeing. No one in Whitechurch Company carried a bicycle that day. Other Companies that assembled at Bweeing were: Courtbrack, Donoughmore, Mourneabbey, Mallow, Castletownroche, Nadd, and a few from Waterloo. There were nearly 200 Volunteers there. I was told that the Schoolmaster at Bweeing put out a green, white and gold flag that day. I had seen one before that in 1915 at Bandon Railway Station carried by the boys of a hurling or football team on the train. They were waving it in the faces of the police on duty.

Some exercises were carried out at Bweeing. Miceal Lynch arrived there soon after we did and stayed all day. We had no definite information of what was intended and did not know at what points other Companies of the Brigade were mobilised. There was, however, a feeling prevailing generally that serious things may happen. Both my father, Peter Harte, and my uncle, James Harte, were old Fenians. My father was always in touch with Tomas MacCurtain and was very friendly with him. I thought he knew more than I did. When I was leaving home that morning I believe he thought we were going into a fight. He said to me, "Mind the turning, Seamus". I understood him to mean that a point would come at which our movement may be turned away from its objective.

It was nearly dark when Tomas MacCurtain and Terence MacSwiney arrived at Bweeing. Terry came to my Company. We were almost new recruits and he drilled us for a short time. He had a most miserable appearance that evening. He told us that we were to return home, but did not give any reasons. I do not remember Tomas MacCurtain speaking to the whole parade, but I saw him speaking to some of the Company Officers. It was Terry who spoke to me most of the time they were there, but I may have been speaking to Tomas also.

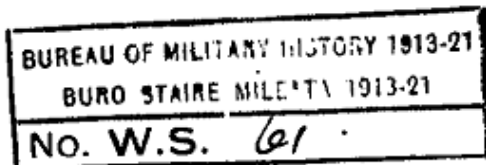
We marched back. It was the worst night I was ever out. We stopped at Grenagh on the way. Tommy Crowley and Billy McCarthy got a lift in a hearse from there to Waterloo. The rest of us marched.

No orders of any kind came to us during Easter Week. We held a parade on Friday night as usual. We got no order to surrender or dump arms, but when we heard of the raids and arrests we put our arms away safely. No arms were surrendered or lost in the Company area and there were no arrests.

I was taken into the I.R.B. a short time before Easter, 1916, by Pa Twomey. I was the only member of the Company in it.

There were no Fianna or Cumann-na-mBhan organisations in the Company area before Easter, 1916.

SIGNED: James Clarto
DATE: 30th October 1947



WITNESS: Severice O'Donoghue