

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 62



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ROINN COSANTA.

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

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Statement by

Patrick Looney,
Meenachonee, Donaghmore,
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STATEMENT OF PATRICK LOONEY,
MEENACHONEE, DONOUGHMORE, CO. CORR.

PERIOD: MARCH, 1914, to MAY, 1916.

UNIT: DONOUGHMORE COMPANY, I.V.

From notes in an old diary I find that the first reference to the Volunteers is under the date Sunday, 29th March, 1914. It is to the effect that at an A.F.I. meeting in Donoughmore a proposal was made to start a Corps of Volunteers. I do not know whether it was before or after this that I went to Cork and searched for Tomás MacCurtain, but it was about this time. I found him at Suttons, where he was employed at the time. He told me that I was the first man from the country to come in and enquire about starting a Volunteer Corps, and that he did not yet know how they were going to organise and manage the country districts. I gave him my address and he gave me his private address, and the address of the rooms being used by the Volunteers as Headquarters at that time. I forget what street it was in. He gave me also some back number of the "Irish Volunteer" to distribute amongst men likely to join, and promised to send me entry forms.

The next reference to Volunteers is under date Sunday, April 5th. On that day I went to Blarney where there was a parade of the Cork City Volunteers. Afterwards I discussed the necessity for forming a Company with T.J. Golden, Gurrane, and the Murrays of Courtbrack. They had no intention of joining then. On 21st April I got forms of application for membership and started immediately to try and get recruits. A few signed the forms, but one man withdrew on the 30th and insisted that I return the form to him. His reason for withdrawing was that he was told he should go to Belfast to fight the Carson Volunteers. I did my best to persuade him these were only enemy reports but it was no use.

On April 26th I went to Cork and arranged for speakers to attend a public meeting to be held on the second Sunday following. I went to Beeing and put up notices and gave out leaflets explaining the objects of the Volunteers. A number of men joined nominally, but the people generally thought us mad. They had nothing to say against me personally; the politicians gave the advice - "Take no notice of him, he's mad". About this time I gave some forms of application for membership to Maurice Brew, Kilmartin, and Jack Looney, Bauracharing. Both returned them some weeks later without the name of a single recruit; they said it was useless - no one would join.

On Sunday, May 10th, 1914, a public meeting was held after second Mass at Donoughmore. I asked Johnny Honohan to take the chair for me, as I was in bad form, and he did so. Liam de Roiste and Sean O Cuill from Cork spoke at the meeting. The first meeting of the Company was held on Sunday, 24th May, at Fornaught, but no business was done. There was a nominal membership of about 30 at this time. From the diary I see that I arranged for a meeting of the Company for Sunday, 21st June, but there is no record that it took place. On Saturday, 27th June, I was in Cork on Volunteer business, and got different views on the question of Redmond's control of the Volunteers which was then demanded. Some thought Redmond would ruin the movement and that I should give it up. I argued that there were men in the Volunteers who would keep the movement straight for Ireland. I had met Patrick Pearse in Millstreet the year before, had heard him speak and had some communication with him later, and I could swear he was not going to give way to Redmond's Imperialism.

On Sunday, 28th June, I started the Volunteers in Beeing with Father Sheehan. I called a meeting for New Tipperary but no one turned up. I felt like giving them up for ever. That is the last entry in the diary relating to the Volunteers; from now on I must depend on my memory.

Some time in October, 1914, a Company of National Volunteers was started at a meeting held in T.D. Murphy's loft over the Mill in New Tipperary. It was attended by the very men who slandered me and my militarism during the previous six months. The Redmondite Company continued in existence until the following year and then faded out. Our own Company had only a nominal existence, and no training was being carried on.

In the Spring or early Summer of 1915 I had a letter from Tomás MacCurtain asking us to meet the Cork Companies at Beeing. I failed to get anyone to go but Peter Downey and myself. Cathal Brugha and Liam Mellows were there that day. Cathal Brugha sang the first verse of "Ninety Eight" and gave a short address. I danced a hornpipe with Freddie Murray. Liam Mellows gave Peter Downey his cane. He was very interested in him as Mellows was recruiting for the Fianna at the time. We marched to New Tipperary and Firmount and returned home.

This Beeing meeting was followed quickly by another at New Tipperary, at which the Cork Volunteers attended. It was more successful and we had about 20 men in the Company at this time. The police began to take an active interest in us, attending all our parades, and following us on our marches. Regular weekly parades were held, and every Sunday from that until November we had exercises at Jerry Healy's field, Donoughmore.

We were ordered to attend the Manchester Martyrs' Commemoration parade in Cork in November, 1915. The order was to the effect that the Company was to parade in full strength, with arms and ammunition and military equipment. This order came in for severe criticism and gloomy predictions from some Volunteers. About 30 men from the Company attended the parade but only about a dozen guns were carried. There were four full cartridge belts, worn by Tim Sexton, Bill Foley, Ba Healy and myself. They wore theirs around their waists and were not very conspicuous. I wore mine around my shoulders outside an oilcoat. The attention of Tomás MacCurtain was called to it, and he congratulated me, saying, "That's the business, Paddy". The procession was formed in the Mardyke, marched over the North Gate Bridge, down Camden Quay, over St. Patrick's Bridge, and up Patrick Street to the Grand Parade.

We had collected money for the purchase of arms, and about this time I purchased out of this fund six .32 revolvers and 300 rounds of ammunition from the Cork Volunteer Headquarters in Sheares Street. I remember on one occasion a search was made of the parcels' van when a train on which I travelled from Cork arrived in Donoughmore. Sergeant Casey, R.I.C., entered the van and searched it thoroughly. I had, in fact, brought out some guns from Cork that day, but had dropped them to Jim Barrett at Firmount Station.

From November, 1915, to Easter, 1916, parades were held two night a week at Aharateen. In January, 1916, Jack Manning was sent to Cork to the Training Course carried out in the Hall in Sheares Street by J.J. O'Connell. The morale and discipline of the Company improved very much, and when the order was given to carry arms, ammunition and one day's rations in the St. Patrick's Day Parade in Cork, it was taken up enthusiastically. Every man who had no gun borrowed one from someone he knew. We had 60 men in this parade. A Section from Rylane was with us then.

The Company was ordered to mobilise after first Mass on Easter Sunday, 1916, with all arms and ammunition, full equipment and two days' rations. The following is a list of those who paraded:-

Stuake Section.

Jack Manning	Captain.
Jeremiah Manning.	P. SULLIVAN
Patrick Looney.	J SULLIVAN
Patrick Collins.	SHEAN KELLEHER
Joseph Collins.	DENNY KELLEHER
Tadg Murphy.	BILL KELLEHER
Jack Buckley.	P. DESMOND
John Downey.	
Tom Downey.	
Peter Downey.	
Dan O'Shea.	
Tom Forde.	
Jackie Murphy.	
Denis Murphy.	
Tim Murphy.	
Billy Murphy.	
Mick Murphy.	
Tim Sexton.	
John Murphy.	
Jeremiah Murphy.	
Denis Sexton.	
Joe Hinchon.	
Tim Cremin.	
Batt. Healy.	
Bill Foley.	
Billy O'Callaghan.	
Denis Corcoran.	
Jack O'Shea.	

Firmount Section.

Jim Barrett.
Denis McCarthy.
Denis O'Callaghan.
Billy Healy.
Maurice Healy.
Tim O'Callaghan.
Paddy Murphy.
Owen McCarthy.
Michael P. Buckley.

Bauracharing Section.

Jeremiah Scandon.
John Scanlon.
Tom Scanlon.
Maurice Brew.
Tim Twomey.
Paddy Twomey.
Paul Collins.
Christopher Twomey.
Tom Twomey.
Michael Twomey.
Denis Sweeney.
Tim O'Connell.
Richard O'Leary.

John Sweeney of Stuake Section paraded also, but stayed at my house on instructions. He went to Beeing later. The arms which the Company had that day were:-

FIFTEEN
Ten D+B. Shot Guns) with 20 rounds of buckshot
Ten S.B. Shot Guns) (No.1) for each gun).
One Lee Enfield Rifle, with 10 rounds.
One old rifle. 10 ROUNDS
Two .22 rifles and 200 rounds.
Eight .32 revolvers and 50 rounds.
Fifteen pikes.
Ten forge made bayonets on shot guns.

About four men had no arms. Four of the revolvers were carried by the Company Officers and four by the Company Scouts. Most of the shot guns had been purchased. The Lee Enfield rifle had come from the Brigade; the other I had in my possession since long before the start of the Volunteers. The revolvers had been purchased from the Brigade. The pikes were made by Denis Mullane, Blacksmith, Stuake, and by Paddy and Joe Collins, who worked for him. They made the holders for the bayonets also.

The Company marched to Beeing Cross, where we were met by other Companies from Courtbrack. Kilmona. Whitechurch. Mourne Abbey. Mallow and Castletownroche. Exercises were carried out there. There was a considerable crowd of onlookers, and a section of recruits fell in and I drilled them. They were:-

Dan T.D. Cremin.
Denis T.D. Cremin.
Tom Mulcahy.
Johnny Mulcahy.
Tom M. Cremin.
Denis M. Cremin.
Patrick M. A. Murphy.
Denis M. A. Murphy.
Tadg McCarthy.
Jim Mc Carthy.

Late in the evening, Tomás MacCurtain and Terence MacSwiney arrived in Beeing in a car driven by Dave O'Callaghan. Tomás spoke to me and said "All is over, Casement is arrested and the guns are probably lost". He addressed the parade and said that they expected the British Government to stop the mobilisation of the Volunteers that day and create a fight, but the enemy was having none. We were ordered to return home, remain on the alert, and stand to our arms during the next week. We marched back in very bad weather.

On Easter Monday, Jack Manning, Denis Murphy. Joe Hinchon. Johnny Sweeney and myself started drawing the shot from 400 cartridges and reloading them with slugs at my house. The slugs were made in a wooden mould which would turn out about a dozen at a time. They were held together in the cartridges with melted candle grease. When fired they would hold together for 200 yards, then divide and be effective for about 200 more. We tried making bullets by melting lead into the cartridges, but on firing them at a mark we found they did not go straight and gave it up. We spent one or two nights on the job of reloading the cartridges, and men from the Sections came and took their supplies away as they were finished.

On Thursday of Easter Week I got a dispatch from Brigade Headquarters. I do not remember its exact words, but its purport was "Get ready" or "be ready for immediate call". On Friday afternoon a messenger arrived from Brigade Headquarters not with orders but to discuss the possibility of bringing out the guns from the city. He called me away from the men and told me that while waiting orders from Dublin they were surrounded, and that now if they could get out the guns from the city the men could easily follow and attack from the outside. I asked if they were searching farmers' carts, and he said he thought they were in the outskirts. "How then," I said, "do they expect to get through?" He said they intended to put the arms into bags of meal and in this way may get through. "Yes", I said, "it would improve the chance if I could get old men to drive the horses. but, unfortunately, I cannot; the drivers would be young Volunteers who would arouse suspicion; possibly I could get one old man".

However, I decided to try, and by getting them to go different roads at different times they may get through; so I asked two from Kilmartin Section to go by Cloghroe, and my own car and possibly an old man, a neighbour, to go the Shournagh way. Before I had time to ask him, a particular order which was likely to cause their capture was

disobeyed, and I decided to cancel that mode of conveyance and try another which I did not think of while with the envoy. I knew from him that the search was only on the outskirts of the city, so I thought it was quite possible to move bags of meal from any part of the city and load it on the Muskerry tram which was not yet being searched. So with one hour's sleep the night before, and running two miles, half dressed, and, I think, in bare feet, to capture the disobedient Volunteer and giving another order to Jack Manning to go and stop the Kilmartin horses, which he also disobeyed, I boarded the 7 a.m. train for the city, a very much worn out man.

I reported to Headquarters in Sheares Street and met Seán Murphy, Sean O'Sullivan and Pat Higgins. Sean Murphy told me an agreement had been come to to give the arms to the Bishop of Cork as a guarantee of peace, and that they would get them back later on, a thing which I had grave doubts about.

On the following day I went to first Mass and put up a notice mobilising the Company. After I left, Sergeant Casey, R.I.C., put up a notice of the surrender in Dublin. It was signed "R.H. Pearse". I took this to be a trick to get at our arms, so I dictated the following notice to Dave Mullane, who wrote it and we put it up:-

THE DONOUGHMORE IRISH VOLUNTEERS
were formed to secure and maintain
Irish rights and liberties and are
not to interfere with anybody until
they are interfered with, and are to
retain their arms under these conditions.

Patrick Looney.

The Company paraded that day and some of them resented the fact that they were not allowed to carry arms. One man refused to parade any more. There were rumours of fighting in other areas, but these turned out to be groundless.

There were no arrests in the Company area, and no arms were lost or surrendered.

SIGNED:

Patrick Looney

DATE:

November 27 1947

WITNESS:

Florence Donoghue

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