

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STÁE ~~STLPA~~ 1513-21

No. W.S. 137

ROINN  COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 137.....

Witness

Seamus McCarthy

Identity

Commandant of Castletownbere Corps, I.V.

Subject

Castletownbere Corps I.V. 1915-1916.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

File No. S. 783.....

Form B.S.M. 2.

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DRAFT STATEMENT OF SEALUS MCCARTHY,
BALLYCROVANE, EYRIES, CASTLETOWNBERE,
CO. CORK.

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The Volunteer organisation was started in Eyries early in 1915 on the initiative of local men. The area included in the Corps was the parish of Eyries, and by the end of 1915 its strength was about 100 men. That strength remained about the same up to Easter, 1916. The Eyries Corps was the only one in this district before 1916; there were no Volunteers in Castletownbere, Bere Island or Adrigole until after 1916.

As we were in a very isolated district we had to rely largely on ourselves for training, but Terence MacSwiney visited us some time in 1915 and took a great interest in the development of the Corps. After that, Daithi Barry, who was then Brigade Adjutant, was here with us for a month or so. Parades were held on week nights and route marches and exercises on Sundays.

I was Commandant of the Corps and Seán O'Driscoll was Captain. I do not think we had any other Officers. Seán O'Driscoll attended the Officers' training class which was held in the Hall in Sheares' Street, Cork, in January, 1916.

On Good Friday morning, 1916, I got our orders for Easter Sunday. They were delivered to me in writing by Fred Murray of Cork, who came on a bicycle. The orders were from the Brigade and were to the effect that we were to parade with all available arms and equipment on Easter Sunday, march to Kenmare and make contact there with the Kenmare Volunteers. The orders said that we would get arms (in Kenmare, as I understood it) and that the Kenmare Volunteers would have been informed of our coming. Previous to that I did not know there were Volunteers in Kenmare; we had no contact with them.

On Easter Sunday the whole Corps paraded, about 100 strong. I will be able to make a list of the names. We were armed with one .22 miniature rifle, carried by Foley, five shot guns and six revolvers. We left Eyries after first Mass and marched through Ardgroon and Lauragh towards Kenmare. We were at Ardgroon about 1 o'clock. There were no Volunteer Units in either of these places at the time. We went on to Ardea, and somewhere between there and Lake House a messenger from Kenmare met us and told us the parade had been cancelled. We had no definite information that a Rising was intended, but understood that there was something serious intended, and that we were to get arms.

The day was very wet, and after taking shelter for a time we decided to scatter for the journey home. We arrived back in Eyries that night.

I do not remember that we got any orders from Cork or elsewhere during Easter Week. No arms were surrendered by the Eyries Corps, and no arrests were made in the parish.

There was no active I.R.B. organisation in Eyries before 1916, though there may have been some older men in the area who were formerly members of the organisation.

There was no Fianna organisation in Eyries before
Easter, 1916.

Seamus McCarthy

17/7/48

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