

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
BUREAU STAIRS MILITARY HISTORY  
No. W.S. 182

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 182.....

Witness

James Wall, Staff Barracks, Boherbue,  
Tralee, Co. Kerry.

Identity

Member of I.V. 1914-1916.

Subject

- (a) Arrests of Casement and Stack.
- (b) Message to Limerick, Easter Sunday 1916.
- (c) Drownings at Ballykissane.

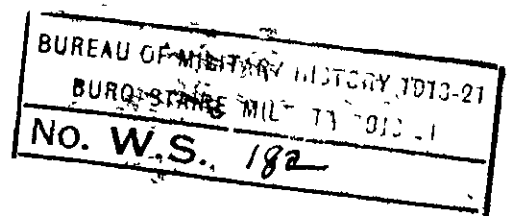
Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil.

File No. ....S.1117. ....

Form B.S.M 2

ORIGINAL



STATEMENT BY JAMES WALL, BOHERBEE, TRALEE,  
COUNTY KERRY.

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I joined the Irish Volunteers in Tralee in 1914. I was then about 16 years of age. Nothing of importance happened for a good while. We were mainly drilling and undergoing training of various kinds. I do not know anything about the Split between the Redmondites and the Irish Volunteers. I continued membership of the organisation - "A" Company, No. 1 battalion. At that time William Farmer and a man named Slattery were the two officers in charge of the company. At the time I joined the Irish Volunteers I was serving my time at the Kerry Motor Works. Some time before Easter Week 1916 Austin Stack told me that I would be wanted for important business especially when I was able to drive. At the time he told me this, I was thinking of leaving Tralee to take up work elsewhere and he suggested that I should not leave. We had Drills twice a week - Wednesdays and Sundays. The last drill was held on Wednesday of Holy Week in the usual way. Austin Stack headed all our Parades. I was an ordinary volunteer at this time and I did not know what was actually going to happen. Some time on Good Friday I heard that Austin Stack had been arrested and there were rumours around the town that men had been captured around Banna Strand, but who or what they were I did not know. Whilst I cannot actually remember, I have an idea that some time on Good Friday evening <sup>we</sup> were all called to a parade at the rink. I cannot remember what happened at this parade but I think that there was a meeting that night by the officers in charge of the battalion whilst we were there and that the meeting was called to consider if steps could be

taken/

taken to rescue Stack. We were armed on this parade but nothing unusual happened that night as far as I can remember. About mid-day on Easter Saturday I saw a prisoner being escorted by a big number of R.I.C. men through the town. They were walking and were going towards the railway station. I was standing in The Mall at the time talking to a Mr. J. King and we commented on the fine appearance of the man who was taller than any of the R.I.C. men. He wore a beard. I had no idea of who the man was. There was no notice taken by anybody and they passing through the town. That was mid-day on Saturday. I had no idea of who the man was until some time later when I met Austin Stack in Richmond Barracks, Dublin, where we were both prisoners. He then told me that the man I had seen was Roger Casement. Nothing else happened on that Easter Saturday nor did I hear of what was happening until Easter Sunday morning - some time early in the morning - when Mr. P.J. Cahill, who was next in command to Stack, sent for me. I returned to the rink to Mr. Cahill and he was in the company of a man whom I was told afterwards was Captain Monteith. This would be about 9 a.m. Both Mr. Cahill and Captain Monteith then addressed me and instructed me to proceed to Limerick and get there fair or foul. They told me to commandeer a car from the Kerry Motor Works where I was working and to deliver a verbal message to a man named Wall in Limerick who, I understood, was an officer in the volunteers there. The message was to the effect "Would the Limerick Volunteers come on to Tralee and collect all the volunteers on the way or would the Tralee volunteers come on to Limerick, or what were they going to do". I commandeered the car from the Kerry Motor Works and proceeded to Limerick via Listowel. I was on my own. When I got into Listowel town and on

reaching The Square I saw two R.I.C. men coming on towards me in a great hurry and putting up their hands for me to stop. I slowed down a little bit and, just as I was near them, I accelerated quickly and passed them by and around the corner on the road to Limerick. As I was passing they tried to jump on to the car. At the time I thought it peculiar that they should try to stop me and I could not make out how they knew I was coming and I have not found out since. I pushed on and got into Abbeyfeale where practically the same thing occurred to me there but I got clear. One of the R.I.C. men hung on to the car for a good bit but eventually he jumped off and eventually I continued to Newcastlewest. Approaching Newcastlewest I saw a policeman armed down on one knee with a rifle pointed in my direction with another policeman standing by his side with his hand up signalling me to stop. About 20 yards behind him again another policeman had me covered also and a third man in position behind him again. I saw I had no chance of getting through and I pulled up the car. The police searched me and the car thoroughly and then escorted me to the police barracks. They brought me out again to bring the car into a Resident Magistrate's place. I do not know his name. They kept me in the barracks for two days. They did not know who I was. I said my name was Laide. They asked me where I was going and I said that I was going to see some friends in Limerick. Eventually they found out my name. Before I left, I remember a telegram coming to the Head Constable when I was in Newcastlewest and the telegram was read out; "Too dangerous to send prisoner to Tralee. Send him to Limerick" and when I heard that I thought there was fighting going on in Tralee. That was Easter Monday when the

telegram/

telegram arrived. I was shifted to Limerick on Easter Monday night and brought to Limerick Jail. The only political prisoner there when I arrived was Sam Windrum with whom I became friendly. I discovered then that he was the driver of the second car that had taken the party to Valentia on Good Friday night, the other car being driven by Tom McInerney and which went over the pier at Ballykissane. The following day I saw the two Brennans, Michael and Patrick, being brought in. Prisoners came in gradually until there were about twenty of us there. That was during Easter Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. Some day that week we were removed to Richmond barracks, Dublin, and I was handcuffed to Sam Windrum on the way up. On our way up I saw Austin Stack a prisoner at Limerick station and Joe Malinn was with him. Stack signalled to me with his finger to his mouth to keep silent. We arrived at Richmond Barracks, Dublin, and we were all put into the gymnasium in the barracks. We were there about three days during which time I had several conversations with Stack and others. One of the first things he said to me was; "What do the Tralee people think of me now". I said "I do not know because I was arrested a short time after yourself". We were kept handcuffed to one another all the night of arrival until the following day. Stack then told me that the man I saw arrested in Tralee was Sir Roger Casement and that he got a great surprise when the Head Constable told him when he was arrested that they had a prisoner and that the police were under the impression that the man was Casement. I said to him "If you knew that Casement was coming in there why hadn't you men with tents pitched outside in Banna". He said "I knew he was coming but I did not know he was coming to Banna". He

said/

said he thought he was coming into Clare. The reason I mentioned about having volunteers in tents at Banna Strand was because I knew that this would ward off suspicion and would afford protection for Casement's arrival. Some time later on that evening Windrum and myself were walking around the gymnasium when a British soldier put his head out through a small slide in a door and shouted out "Paddy, there is going to be no more executions" and I said "How do you know" and he said "An order from the Home Secretary. I went along and told Stack this and he would not believe me so I brought him along to the door where the soldier was and I knocked again and he said "Don't do that" and I asked the soldier to repeat what he said a while ago about the executions. The soldier replied "Yes, there are to be no more executions - an order from the Home Secretary". After this I thought Stack was a changed man and that he became more active and happier. We were then transferred to Wakefield Jail in a cattle boat. Windrum was released from Wakefield shortly after we arrived. One day, shortly after our arrival, as our cell doors on the first floor were being opened and waiting for the warders I looked down into the main hall and saw a number of prisoners wearing their own clothes being brought out from their cells. There was a warder standing in front of my cell looking down too and he turned around and saw me and said to me "Isn't this a queer world". I said "Who are they down there". He said "Conscientious objectors". "Those fellows are put in there," he said, "because they refuse to fight for their own country and they will be paid for it and I believe you fellows are put in here because you tried to fight for your own country without any pay. I believe you have to buy your own rifles and ammunition. It is a queer, queer world". About 25

prisoners from Tralee arrived about three weeks later. After a couple of months we were transferred to Frongoch. It was here I met Tommie McInerney. I became great friends with Tommie whilst at Frongoch and he told me the story of the drownings at Ballykissane. His account of it to me was that he was driving the first car and that Sam Windrum was right behind driving the second car and the lights from Sam's car were reflecting on his windscreen and McInerney decided to drive away from him so as to avoid the light being reflected on his windscreen. Some time later he felt that he had taken the wrong turning and he said to one of the passengers "we are on the wrong road" "This seems to be a bye-road". There was a house on the left and he asked one of them to go out and enquire. He had pulled up the car in the meantime and one of the men in the back of the car said "Drive on. We are on the right road. I know the road". He had just gone about 100 yards in second gear when she toppled in over the pier. He managed to get out of the car and he heard a man crying for help and he swam towards him and said "Come along this way". He had an overcoat with wrenches in the pockets and he found he could not carry on and had to let him go. He swam then to the other side where he saw a light and he heard a man saying "Come on, come on", you are alright". He fainted when he heard the voice and the man ran in and pulled him out. Whilst I was in Limerick Jail with Sam Windrum he told me his portion of the episode. He said that during the journey, when he missed McInerney's car which was on in front, he enquired to know if any car had passed on and was told it had not. Then he changed his direction and went to Killarney. I cannot

remember/

remember if he told me what time he arrived in Killarney but I remember that he definitely told me that he got to Killarney and dumped a bag of stuff over a wall near the town and also he broke a spring on the road and left the car in Castleisland. He went by train from Castleisland to Limerick and on his arrival home was arrested. He did not tell me what happened the passengers or, if he did, I cannot remember. We were transferred from Frongoch to Wormwood Scrubs and back to Frongoch again and released from there sometime before Christmas. I cannot remember the date. Up to the time of my mission to Limerick and my arrest, I did not hear anything at all about an armed ship.

SIGNED:

James Wall

Witness:

Mblaney Bond

DATE

26<sup>th</sup> January 1949

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1018-21
BUREAU STAFF, I. L. 13.3.21
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