

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21
No. W.S. 192

ROINN  COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.
STATEMENT BY WITNESS
DOCUMENT NO. W.S...192.....

Witness

Judge Fionan Lynch,
"Minore",
Orwell Park, Rathgar, Dublin.

Identity

Captain, 1st Battn. Irish Volunteers
1916.

Subject

Gaelic activities, Dublin, prior to
1916 Rising.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil.

File No. ... S.495.....

① ORIGINAL

In April 1912, I arrived in Dublin to take up a teaching appointment, and I ~~took up residence at~~ ^{went to reside} "Zeráin nu nZaested," 44 Mountjoy Street. I was preceded to Dublin and to "Zeráin nu nZaested" by Gearóid Ó'Sullivan - he arrived only a few days before me, and we had already arranged by letter that ~~we~~ we should stay at 44. It will be remembered that this house afterwards became historic as the "digs" of Michael Collins during the period from his release from ^{Frongoch, at June 1916} ~~Ballykingsland~~ up to the Truce. The house was owned by my Aunt, ^{the late} Miss McCarthy, and it became possibly the most raided house in Dublin in the years 1920 & 1921.

Gaelic League

I had already been a member of the Gaelic League before coming to Dublin - I had taught in Swansea, S. Wales for a few years, and while there a few of us formed a Gaelic League Branch in which I acted as teacher to the other members. It was natural, therefore, that I should join the Gaelic League on coming to Dublin - and it was also natural that Gearóid Ó'Sullivan and myself should choose the Keating Branch, as this was the Branch that sponsored Munster Irish. I should have said perhaps that Gearóid Ó'Sullivan and myself had been fellow students in St. Patrick's Training College for Teachers from 1909 to 1911, and that while there we had become very close friends - a friendship only severed by the death of Gearóid last Easter.

Zo ndearfaid' Dia treasaire dár.

When we joined the Keating Branch, the late Casib Bóizá was chairman and amongst the prominent members were

211

Paras Béaláin, the Foley family from (Cabra Road (including P. Stearns or "Fuera Eitgeae" Mical (of the Foley type writing Company), Nora who subsequently married Professor Taidg O'Donohue (Tána) the well-known Irish poet and writer, and Brigid who became Mrs Martin. Seán McDermot, who was executed after the Rising, was a frequent visitor to the Branch with Con Collins, a P. Office official and a native of W. Limerick - but Seán went around to all the Branches a good deal in the course of his work as organiser of the I. R. B. He, however, came to us to relax, and I think he liked the general atmosphere of the Club as it was of those days. Taidg (J. J. Kelly), Colm O'Murcain and a number of others subsequently very prominent, were also members. Diarmuid O'Keefe, now Commissioner of Public Works and a boyhood friend of Seán's joined the Keating Branch with us. The three of us subsequently became members of the Committee of the Branch, and our services were requisitioned for teaching classes both adult and juvenile almost from the day we joined.

During 1913 Paras Béaláin with the assistance of a group of us from the Keating Branch founded "Nu h-Áisíóirí" - a Dramatic Society for the production of plays in the Irish language. This is still in existence under the name of "Cinnár Dramátoirí" or was until quite recently.

Con Collins (Seán McDermot's friend), Diarmuid O'Keefe, Sparóid Ó'Sullivan and myself were amongst the persons who did the principal male parts, while Máire ní Conrath (now ~~later father~~ of the Presentation Convent Killarney) Máire Dixon now a nun in Lion Hill

Nu h-Áisíóirí

Teresa ni Mairé (now wife of Professor J.J. Nolan, Registrar U.C.D.) Brigit Dixon, sister of Maire and Carlin de Bullé (Wolfe) played the female parts.

All the male members of the h-*h* and the Dixon girls took part in the Rising of 1916 indeed there were very few members of the Keating Branch (certainly of those under 35 at the time) who did not take part in the Rising.

During the years 1914 and 1915 we produced Irish plays at intervals in Dublin, and in the summer of 1914 we did a tour for a week of Cork and Kerry producing plays in different towns each night and winding up with playing two or three nights at the Oireasias in Killarney.

In 1915 we were commissioned to produce the plays again at the Oireasias which was that year held in Dundalk. At that Oireasias Gearoid and myself were elected to the *comrad* of the Gaelic League. It was during our tour in 1914 that the gun-running took place at Howth, so that we missed that historic occasion. Our tour had already been advertised and arranged before the time of the landing at Howth became known, and Seán McDermot insisted on our going on with our arrangements to produce Irish plays in the South.

Dermot O'Shearty, Gearoid O'Sullivan and myself went together to the meeting at the Rotunda Park for the founding of the Volunteers at the end of 1913. It was in many ways a hectic meeting - the big Tramways Strike was still fresh in the minds of the people in Dublin, and Labour was very sore against anybody who had been opposed to them in that strike. Labour was extremely

Irish
Volunteers

at the meeting though I can't remember now who was the labour spokesman; but some in the body of the hall presented ~~some~~ ^{certain} people being on the platform - as far as I can remember most of the opposition was to Mr. Larry Kettle owing to some labour trouble at his brother's farm in North County Dublin. The disturbances were eventually satisfied, and ~~eventually~~ the Volunteers were declared ^{duly} established amidst very great enthusiasm.

Joining
to
Volunteers

My friends and myself gave in our names as members immediately after the meeting, as did most of those present. ~~at the meeting~~

Within a week or two all of us from that area of the North City were summoned to our first drill at, I think, 41 Parnell Square (the Foresters' Hall). We continued for some months to have weekly or bi-weekly drills, and at an early stage I was picked out by the instructor to take some of the squads for drilling - to this day I don't know by what process the instructor picked his men, but he rarely had to put a man back to the parko as unsuitable.

Formation
of
Companies
and
Election
of
Officers

Sometime in the Summer of 1914 - about May or June, I think - there was the first election of Volunteer officers, and the particular group to which I belonged became "F" Co.; Battalions were formed later, and we became "F" Co. 1st Battalion. Paras Beaslai was elected Captain of our Company. Sean Shuldice, a Civil Servant, 1st Lieut. and was elected 2nd Lieut.

Formation
of
Battalions

When the Battalions were formed shortly afterwards Ned Daly who was Captain of "D" Co. became Comd. of the 1st Batt. and Paras Beaslai became Vice-Comd. This created a vacancy in the Captaincy of "F" Co. and as Sean Shuldice couldn't accept

the Captaincy owing to his position in the Civil Service, I became Captain, and I held that position (except for a short interval to which I shall later refer) up to and during the rising at Easter 1916.

I think it was some time after I had been elected Captain of the Company that Sean McDermott asked me to become a member of the I. R. B.

While I had no definite knowledge of the existence of that organisation prior to my joining it, I had a very shrewd idea that there was some body of the kind behind the whole origin of the Volunteers; subsequently found out that nearly all the officers of the Volunteers were already members of the I. R. B. before they were elected officers, and I think the I. R. B. Supreme Council interested themselves in seeing that members of the I. R. B. should officer the Volunteer organisation.

The fact that I was already a close friend of Sean McDermott's presumably satisfied the Supreme Council that my election to the ^{Officers Rank} ~~Company~~ could be let go without any opposition. Be that as it may, I had no hesitation in accepting the invitation of Sean McDermott to become a member and he then and there administered the I. R. B. oath to me.

I think this took place about the Spring of 1915, and I was attached to the "Circle" which met in Gardiner Street with Bulmer Hopson as "Centre".

Domnall O'Hegarty, Gerard Sullivan, Con Collins & Dermot O'Callaghan were amongst the members of that Circle - I remember them well as they were all members of the Keating Branch of the Gaelic League. Beyond having to attend a monthly meeting of the Circle, I don't say that my activities were in any way altered through joining the I. R. B. - I already with Gerard O'Sullivan was helping Sean McDermott in

16
getting out "Irish Freedom" which, on joining the I. R. B., I gathered was the organ of that body. I should say that I never held any office in the I. R. B. at any time, and, indeed, I don't remember attending any meetings of the "Circle" after the Rising - though I may be wrong in that. As far as I can now remember, the full strength of our "Circle" was about thirty.

Having been so closely in touch with Seán McDermot, I know that the I. R. B. were strongly opposed to allowing in John Redmond's nominees to the Volunteer Executive, though some very earnest and self-sacrificing members of the Executive (including, I think, some members of the I. R. B.) disagreed with that policy.

The O'Reilly and Sir Roger Casement, for instance, supported the admission of Redmond's nominees - and I have a hint of notion that Bulmer Hopson also favoured that policy.

I have reason especially to know Casement's attitude on the matter. The late John Daly of America, the Veteran Fenian and uncle of Comdt Ned Daly and of Mrs Tom Clarke ~~used~~ ^{used to} come every summer about that time, come up to San Francisco for a few weeks, charge, and Seán McDermot, Gearoid O'Sullivan and myself on more than one occasion went out to pass an evening with him and to play Bridge.

One evening when we arrived at the house, Casement was there before us, and he left shortly after we arrived. John Daly in his great booming voice turned Seán McDermot when the door had closed on Casement and in his great booming voice

17
11

said: "Damn you, McDermot. You came at the wrong time - I was just going to pitch into him." It was a week or so after the vote of the Volunteer Executive ~~for~~ admitting Redmond's nominees to the Volunteer Executive. Daly was, however, a great realist and he wasted no time on regrets, but told Sean that he and his crowd should try to keep as much control as possible through the Companies.

The out-break of the European War in August 1914 and the pro-recruiting attitude of Mr Redmond and his Party made it inevitable that the nominees of that Party could not be retained in the Executive, and the split in the Volunteers duly followed.

Proposed
Mansion
House
Raid

I think that it was in September 1914 that the British Prime Minister came to Dublin to speak with Redmond and others at a big recruiting meeting in the Dublin Mansion House. While I can't say definitely who it was that originated the idea of occupying the Mansion House with Volunteers to prevent the Meeting, I am almost certain that it must have been the I. R. B. - in conjunction with James Connolly of the Irish Citizen Army, afterwards ~~(a signatory of the Easter Week Proclamation)~~ executed following the Rising.

At any rate a picked body of men were secretly mobilised at 41 Parnell Square a few nights prior to the date of the Bequith meeting, rifles and ammunition were handed out to each man, and we were informed as to what was intended. I thought then - and still think - that it was a mad scheme, and that if we had brought it off or even made to attempt the Volunteers

8.
would have been wiped out in what would have been little more than a street riot. Sean McDermot however, was strongly for it, but I am certain that many others besides myself of those present felt like I did. Indeed I know that Tom Ashe did, for I was in his Company in the hall for a good part of the time we were there - so did Gearoid O'Sullivan, Dermot O'Segarty and Sean McDermot's "alter ego" Con Collins.

Amphons, scouts reported that the Mansion House was already occupied by a Company of Highland Light Infantry ~~and~~ fully equipped with Lewis Guns, and the project was abandoned.

Subsequently I had frequent arguments with Sean McDermot about the proposal for that night, and he stubbornly kept to his view that it would have been the right thing to do, if it had been possible; I even joked with him ^{about it} when we were in the Richmond Barracks awaiting trial after the Rising, and I compared the glorious week we had just been through with going down in a street brawl, but he still held to his view of the affair!

At any rate following the Eviction of that night in 41 Parnell Square, things went along in hum-drum fashion for a year or more - but our lives in those days were very full indeed what with our duties as Volunteers, teaching Gaelic League classes and rehearsing and producing plays in Irish with ~~the~~ M. H. MacDonnell; when I say our lives I refer especially to Gearoid O'Sullivan, Dermot O'Segarty, Páras Béasláir and myself.

I should have mentioned that after I was elected Captain of F.C., Dermot O'Segarty was elected to

to be Second Lieut. in my place, and both Sean
 Shouldice and himself continued as Lieuts.
 of the Company up to and including the Rising.
 Sometime during 1915, Battalion Councils were in-
 stituted - certainly in the Dublin area. The
 Council consisted of the Comdt. Vice-Comdt. Adjutant
 and Quartermaster of the Battalion together with the
 Captains of the Companies in the Batt. I have
 already mentioned that Ned Daly became Comdt
 of the 7th Batt. with Piaras Beaslay as his Vice-Comdt.
~~Seamus O'Fullivan who subsequently married a~~
~~sister of Ned Daly's and was present in (Dublin)~~
~~was Adjutant and Eamon Monte Quartermaster~~
 As far as I can remember, the late Eamon Duggan
 became Adjutant and Eamon Monte Quartermaster.
 The Battalion Council met weekly, and I can only
 now remember that Frank Fehy Capt. "C" Co. (now
 Comm. Comrade of the Dail), Seamus O'Fullivan
 Capt. of "B" Co. who subsequently married a sister
 of Ned Daly's and Bob Monteith Captain of, I think,
 "H" Co. ^{and Sean Heuston} were amongst the Company Captains who
 used to attend.

I have now only a vague recollection of the business
 transacted at the meetings of the Batt. Council, but
 I know we arranged parades and manoeuvres
 for the Batt. and were constantly grousing at ~~our~~ ^{the}
 dearth of rifles and ammunition - though on the
 whole most of the men succeeded in equipping
 themselves fairly well in this respect.

The Battalion manoeuvres were carried out
 mostly in the North County - Swords, Finglas &c.
 but shortly before the Rising, in January or early
 February 1916, we had ^a very important rehearsal

in the heart of the City - actually on the ground which the Battalion occupied in Easter Week. Sean Heuston was in charge of one half of the Battalion and I was in charge of the other half with the Battalion Staff acting as referees. These particular manoeuvres were referred to later I understand, by the Detectives who gave evidence before the Commission presided over by Lord Hardinge which enquired into the Rising.

Sometime towards the end of January or the beginning of February of 1916, the Manager of the school in which I taught came to see me at the school bearing with him a communication from the Commissioners of National Education informing him that I was an officer in the Irish Volunteers and instructing him that he should inform me that unless I severed my connection with the Volunteers, my "salary" would be withdrawn. I told the Manager that it was quite true that I was a member and that when I had consulted my superior officers I should let him know what I should do. I am afraid this attitude was rather a shock to the good Manager, but after a little bluster he left matters at rest.

That Evening I reported to Sean McDermott who sent me on to Tom McDermott, who discussed the position with me. He eventually ordered me to "lie low" for the time being - to sever formally my connection with the Volunteers as there were already crowds of refugees from England on our hands.

At the next meeting of "F" Company, I reported to them all that transpired, and my orders to ~~sever~~ resign for the time being from the Company, and I told

Temporary
Resignation
from
Volunteers.

11.
them that when there would be "anything doing" they would find me back to lead them.

From then up to the Rising I did not parade with the Company, but at the request of several persons whose positions made it impossible, ^{by then} to be openly associated with the Volunteers, I organised a Sunday morning squad training centre at 25 Parnell Square, the Gaelic League Head-Quarters. I feel still that we did very useful work during that period up to the Rising at these Sunday morning meetings, and Liam Archer, now Colonel Liam Archer, Arch-Chief of Staff, helped greatly in that work.

It is a q. incidence that as far as I know only three teachers in the whole of Ireland were ordered out of the Volunteers, and that those three were Kerry-men. Tom Ashe, who taught at Corduff, just got his notice a few days after I got mine, and Diarmuid O'Connell of Cahirciveen who then taught at Follmone N.S. near Cahirciveen got his notice about the same time. They were ordered like myself to "lie low" and accept the situation for the time being, but both were back in their places for Easter Week - Tom Ashe at Ashbourne; and Diarmuid O'Connell brought his men into Ireland to be ready for orders there.

As far as I can remember I continued during this period to attend to meetings of the Ball. Council. At any rate, I know I was present a week or so before the Rising for at that meeting I was given the area to be occupied by my Company and told by the Comdr. to survey the ground for military

for barricades, points of vantage to be occupied and so on in good time before Easter Sunday.

I think it must have been at this meeting that we were formally told about the intended Rising - though it was "in the air" for some time before that and few of us can have had little doubt that a Rising was imminent. At any rate Comdt Daly ~~only~~ ordered all the Company officers present at that last meeting of the Ball. Council to go over the ground to be occupied by their respective Companies, and he gave us all explicit instructions as to the area to be occupied by us.

On Holy Thursday night, I went to the weekly parade of "F" Co. and took over Gunnar's leadership of "F" Co. I reminded the men of what I had told them a few months before when leaving them - that when there would be "anything doing" I would be back to lead them. I then said - "Well, I am back," and I will ever remember with pride the cheers with which that announcement was greeted ~~and~~ indeed, the most precious memory of my whole life is my association with the grand young men who formed "F" Co. and I am very naturally proud that they elected me their Captain.

During the last three or four days before the Rising the excitement was at fever height, and rumors were rife as to a general powder-up by the British and so on. Somewhere about that time or perhaps earlier in Holy Week, most of the leaders changed their addresses in order to stay in houses where there were a number of armed Volunteers, who could resist any attempt at arrest.

Seán McDermot came to 44 Mountjoy Street with us; in addition to Gearoid O'Sullivan and myself, there were also staying in 44 at that time Mark O'Spinnell, Clerk of the Dail, Fiona (Floss) O'Doherty and Tom Keating all members of my Company. Keating was a wireless operator, and he was drowned when the car in which he was travelling to Cahirween went into the Lough at Ballykissane Quay on Easter Saturday 1916.

Tom Blake took up his abode with the O'Connors of Sherrard Street of which family the father and three sons were Volunteers - John was a sergeant in my Company and is now ^{the} well-known Dublin Solicitor, John S. O'Connor.

Pearse stayed at home at Rathfarnham but had some Volunteers staying on the premises.

About 2 A.M. on Easter Saturday morning there was a terrific pat-a-tat-tat at our door in Mountjoy Street, and we all drew our guns in expectation of a raid. The man at the door however, was Seán Connolly, killed on ^{the} Monday following, during the attack on the Castle, and he brought a despatch to Seán McDermot with regard to Pearse's arrest. On Seán's orders Gearoid and myself at once flagged a taxi, and drove out to St Enda's with orders to inform Pearse that he should come at once in the taxi with us to Liberty Hall. We reached St Enda's about 6 AM and when Pearse had dressed we brought him to Liberty Hall, where conferences went on through out the day.

I was given the duty of posting a relay of cycle scouts from the Vic-regal Lodge to Liberty Hall.

W. W. O'Sullivan
 O'Sullivan
 name

114.
Indeed "Y. Co." was given a number of duties of that kind, owing to Sean McDermot knowing us so well, and I say it with justifiable pride, having the greatest confidence in us.

A most unpleasant duty imposed on me at the time was to place a guard over my own J. R. B. "Centre", Bulmer Hobson, who was detained by order of the Supreme Council for some days prior to the Rising. My instructions were that he was to be released when the Rising had started. As far as I know, the only reason for Hobson's arrest was that he agreed with McNeill that a Rising was impossible without German aid; and therefore when the "Auld" failed to lend any substantial share of arms he was opposed to the Rising going ahead at all at that time.

On Easter Sunday morning, the Sunday paper carried Sean McNeill's proclamation of the "monocurses" for that day; we heard myself were at an Early Mass and we brought back the paper with us to Sean McDermot. It was the first and only time that I saw Sean really angry and upset; ~~he certainly was then and he used~~ I think myself that if he and the others, who insisted on carrying on with the Rising, have taken McNeill more into their confidence, there would have been no such proclamation from McNeill. While he was titular head of the Volunteers, he was undoubtedly being kept in the dark about many things.

However, this order of McNeill's meant another day of meetings, and the signatures of the

151
proclamation met all day long, with intervals
for meals, in the premises of the Keating
Branch of the Gaelic League.

Who present
at the meeting
when we were
being searched

It must have been about mid. night or best
Sunday night that they finished, and we then
left the premises for various "digs" as 44
had been visited by the Police that day Enquiring
about Sean Keating, on whose body the Police
must have found that address. Gearoid
O'Sullivan, whom Sean McDermot appointed his
aide. de. Camp, went with Sean to Fleming's
Hotel, I went with Diarmuid O'Kearty to his
"digs" in St. Peter's Road, Phibsboro' and Floss
O'Doherty went with Mick Collins to Rathdown
Road, N.C.R. Most O'Connell stayed in
"44", and as nothing happened by way of a
raid during the night, he had gone well ahead
with getting our rifles out of their "cache" in
the ceiling of 44 by the time we reached the place
on Easter Monday morning.

The first Battalion mobilised that morning
in Blackhall Place - I forget now what
hall it was, but it was the meeting place of
at least one of the Companies of the Battalion.
The battalion was somewhat attenuated as one
might expect after the Countermanding order.

Comdt. Daly addressed the men, and after
a little while we were ordered to take up our
positions in the areas already allotted to us.

All the Company officers were present, and with
the exception of one officer carried out the orders of
the Comdt. This officer said that the whole thing was
lunacy, and he left the hall and went home. His
name was, I think, Albright and he had been Captain of '86.

17.
"Daily Mail" by General Sir John Maxwell where he says: "The allegations of brutality seem almost exclusively concerned with the fighting in N. King Street. ~~area~~ With the one exception of the place at Ballsbridge, where the Sherwood Foresters were ambushed, this was by far the worst fighting that occurred in the whole of Dublin. At first the troops, coming from one end of the street, were repulsed, and it was only when we made an attack from both ends that we succeeded after twenty-four hours fighting in capturing the street." The casualties were very heavy during this fighting.

In combination with Colonel Taylor's description of the fighting in our company area with Sir John Maxwell's statement, is the finest tribute that could be paid to my men.

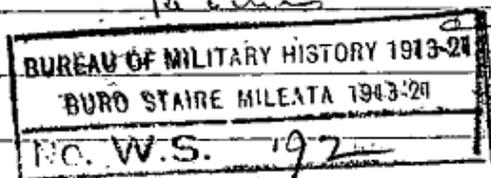
"F. Co." occupied the area from N. King Street along Church Street to May Lane where we were joined to "C" Company who held the Four Courts.

On Saturday evening, worn out from fighting incessantly for three days, we fell back on the Four Courts and very shortly afterwards the order came for surrender.

Fiona Lynch

10th October 1948

When
When
When



W.S. 192.

ORIGINAL

STATEMENT BY JUDGE EIONAN LYNCH, "MINORE",

ORWELL PARK, RATHGAR, DUBLIN.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY I.R.A.

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

NO. W.S.

192

In April 1912 I arrived in Dublin to take up a teaching appointment and I went to reside at "Grianán na nGaedheal", 44, Mountjoy St. I was preceded to Dublin and to "Grianán na nGaedheal" by Gearoid O'Sullivan - he arrived only a few days before me, and we had already arranged by letter that we should stay at 44. It will be remembered that this house afterwards became historic as the "digs" of Michael Collins during the period from his release from Frongoch at Xmas 1916 up to the Truce. The house was owned by my aunt, the late Miss McCarthy, and it became possibly the most raided house in Dublin in the years 1920 and 1921.

GAELIC LEAGUE.

I had already been a member of the Gaelic League before coming to Dublin. I had taught in Swansea, S. Wales, for a few years, and while there a few of us formed a Gaelic League Branch in which I acted as teacher to the other members. It was natural, therefore, that I should join the Gaelic League on coming to Dublin - and it was also natural that Gearoid O'Sullivan and myself should choose the Keating Branch as this was the Branch that sponsored Munster Irish. I should have said perhaps that Gearoid O'Sullivan and myself had been fellow students in St. Patrick's Training College for Teachers from 1909 to 1911, and that while there we had become very close friends - a friendship only severed by the death of Gearoid last Easter. . Go ndeanfaidh Dia trócaire air.

When we joined the Keating Branch, the late Cathal Brugha was Chairman and amongst the prominent members were Piaras Beaslai, the Foley family from Cabra Road (including Risteard or "Fiachra Eilgeach" Micheal (of the Foley Typewriting Company), Nora, who subsequently married Professor Tadhg O'Donohue (Tórna), the well known Irish Poet and Writer, and Brigid, who became Mrs. Martin; Sean McDermott, who was executed after the Rising, was a frequent visitor to the Branch with Con Collins, a Post Office official, and a native of W.Limerick

but Sean went around to all the Branches a good deal in the course of his work as organiser of the I.R.B. He, however, came to us to relax, and I think he liked the general atmosphere of Craobh an Chéitinigh of those days. Sgeilg (J.J. O'Kelly), Colm Ó Murchadha and a number of others, subsequently very prominent, were also members.

Diarmuid O'Hegarty, now Commissioner of Public Works, and a boyhood friend of Gearoid's, joined the Keating Branch with us. The three of us subsequently became members of the Committee of the Branch, and our services were requisitioned for teaching classes both adult and juvenile almost from the day we joined.

NA HAISTEOIRI.

During 1913 Pearas Beaslai, with the assistance of a group of us from the Keating Branch, founded Na hAisteoiri - a Dramatic Society for the production of plays in the Irish Language. This is still in existence under the name of "Comhar Dramuiochta" or was until quite recently. Con Collins (Sean McDermott's friend), Dermot O'Hegarty, Gearoid O'Sullivan and myself were amongst the persons who did the principal male parts, while Maire Ní Chonail (now of the Presentation Convent, Killarney), Maire Dixon (now a nun in Sion Hill), Treasa Ní Mhuirthile (now wife of Professor J.J.Nolan, Registrar, U.C.D.), Brigid Dixon, sister of Maire, and Caitlin de Bhulbh (Woulfe) played the female parts.

All the male members of Na hAisteoiri and the Dixon girls took part in the Rising of 1916 - indeed there were very few members of the Keating Branch (certainly of those under 35 at the time) who did not take part in the Rising.

During the years 1914 and 1915 we produced Irish plays at intervals in Dublin, and in the Summer of 1914 we did a tour for a week of Cork and Kerry, producing plays in different towns each night and winding up with playing two or three nights at the Oireachtas in Killarney.

In 1915 we were commissioned to produce the plays again at the

Oireachtas which was that year held in Dundalk. At that Oireachtas Gearoid and myself were elected to the Coisde Gnotha of the Gaelic League. It was during our tour of 1914 that the gun-running took place at Howth, so that we missed that historic occasion. Our tour had already been advertised and arranged before the time of the landing at Howth became known, and Sean McDermott insisted on our going on with our arrangements to produce Irish plays in the south.

IRISH VOLUNTEERS.

Dermot O'Hegarty, Gearoid O'Sullivan and myself went together to the meeting at the Rotunda Rink for the founding of the Volunteers at the end of 1913. It was in many ways a hectic meeting - the big Tramways strike was still fresh in the minds of the people in Dublin, and Labour was very sore against anybody who had been opposed to them in that strike. Labour was, of course, represented at the meeting though I can't remember who was the Labour spokesman; but some in the body of the hall resented certain people being on the platform - as far as I can remember, most of the opposition was to Mr. Larry Kettle owing to some labour trouble at his brother's farm in North Co. Dublin. The disturbers were eventually satisfied, the Volunteers were declared duly established amidst very great enthusiasm.

JOINING THE VOLUNTEERS.

My friends and myself gave in our names as members immediately after the meeting, as did most of those present.

Within a week or two, all of us from that area of the North city were summoned to our first drill at, I think, 41 Parnell Square (the Foresters' Hall). We continued for some months to have weekly or bi-weekly drills, and at an early stage, I was picked out by the instructor to take some of the squads for drilling - to this day I don't know by what process the instructor picked his men, but he rarely had to put a man back to the ranks as unsuitable.

FORMATION OF COMPANIES & ELECTION OF OFFICERS.

Sometimes in the Summer of 1914 - about May or June, I think - there was the first election of Volunteer officers, and the particular group to which I belonged became F/Coy. Battalions were formed later

and we became F/Coy. 1st Battn. Piaras Beaslai was elected Capt. of our Company, Sean Shouldice, a civil servant, 1st Lieut. and I was elected 2nd Lieut.

FORMATION OF BATTALIONS.

When the Battalions were formed shortly afterwards Ned Daly, who was Captain of A/Coy. became Comdt. of the 1st Bn. and Piaras Beaslai became Vice Comdt. This created a vacancy in the Captaincy of F/Coy. and, as Sean Shouldice couldn't accept the Captaincy owing to his position in the Civil Service, I became Captain, and I held that position (except for a short interval to which I shall later refer) up to and during the Rising at Easter 1916.

JOINING THE I.R.B.

I think it was some time after I had been elected Captain of the Company that Sean McDermott asked me to become a member of the I.R.B. While I had no definite knowledge of the existence of that organisation prior to my joining it, I had a very shrewd idea that there was some body of the kind behind the whole origin of the Volunteers; I subsequently found out that nearly all the officers of the Volunteers were already members of the I.R.B. before they were elected officers and I think the I.R.B. Supreme Council interested themselves in seeing that members of the I.R.B. should officer the Volunteers organisation. The fact that I was already a close friend of Sean McDermott's presumably satisfied the Supreme Council that my election to the officer's rank could be let go without any opposition. Be that as it may, I had no hesitation in accepting the invitation of Sean McDermott to become a member, and he then and there administered the I.R.B. oath to me. I think this took place about the Spring of 1915, and I was attached to the "Circle" which met in Gardiner St. with Bulmer Hobson as "Centre". Diarmuid O'Hegarty, Gearoid O'Sullivan, Con Collins and Denny O'Callaghan were amongst the members of that Circle - I remember these well, as they were all members of the Keating Branch of the Gaelic League. Beyond having to attend a monthly meeting of the Circle, I can't say that my activities were in any way altered through joining the I.R.B. - I already, with Gearoid O'Sullivan, was helping Sean McDermott in getting out "Irish

Freedom" which, on joining the I.R.B., I gathered was the organ of that body.

I should say that I never held any office in the I.R.B. at any time, and, indeed, I can't remember attending any meetings of the Circle after the Rising - though I may be wrong in that. As far as I can remember now, the full strength of our Circle was about thirty.

Having been so closely in touch with Sean McDermott, I know that the I.R.B. were strongly opposed to allowing in John Redmond's nominees to the Volunteer Executive, though some very earnest and self-sacrificing members of the Executive (including, I think, some members of the I.R.B.) disagreed with that policy.

The O'Rahilly and Sir Roger Casement, for instance, supported the admission of Redmond's nominees - and I have a kind of notion that Bulmer Hobson also favoured that policy. I have reason especially to know Casement's attitude on the matter. The late John Daly of Limerick, the veteran Fenian and uncle of Comdt. Ned Daly and of Mrs. Tom Clarke, every Summer about that time used to come up to Sandycove for a few weeks' change, and Sean McDermott, Gearoid O'Sullivan and myself, on more than one occasion, went out to pass an evening with him and to play bridge. One evening when we arrived at the house, Casement was there before us, and he left shortly after we arrived. John Daly turned to Sean McDermott when the door had closed on Casement and, in his great booming voice, said "Damn you, McDermott, you came at the wrong time. I was just going to pitch into him". It was a week or so after the vote admitting Redmond's nominee's to the Volunteer Executive. Daly was, however, a great realist, and he wasted no time on regrets, but told Sean that he and his crowd should try to keep as much control as possible through the companies.

The outbreak of the European War in August 1914, and the pro-recruiting attitude of Mr. Redmond and his Party made it inevitable that the nominees of that Party could not be retained in the Executive, and the split in the Volunteers duly followed.

PROPOSED MANSION HOUSE RAID.

I think it was in September 1914, that the British Prime Minister came to Dublin to speak with Redmond and others at a big recruiting meeting in the Dublin Mansion House. While I can't say definitely who it was that originated the idea of occupying the Mansion House with Volunteers to prevent the meeting, I am almost certain that it must have been the I.R.B. in conjunction with James Connolly of the Irish Citizen Army (a signatory of the Easter Week Proclamation, executed following the Rising).

At any rate, a picked body of men were secretly mobilised at 41 Parnell Square a few nights prior to the date of the Asquith meeting. Rifles and ammunition were handed out to each man, and we were informed as to what was intended. I thought then - and still think - that it was a mad scheme, and that if we had brought it off or even made the attempt, the Volunteers would have been wiped out in what would have been little more than a street riot. Sean McDermott, however, was strongly for it, but I am certain that many others, besides myself of those present, felt like I did. Indeed, I know that Tom Ashe did, for I was in his Company in the Hall for a good part of the time we were there - so did Gearoid O'Sullivan, Dermot O'Hegarty and Sean McDermott's "alter ego" Con Collins.

Anyhow, scouts reported that the Mansion House was already occupied by a company of Highland Light Infantry, fully equipped with Lewis Guns, and the project was abandoned.

Subsequently I had frequent arguments with Sean McDermott about the proposal for that night, and he stubbornly kept to his view that it would have been the right thing to do, if it had been possible; I even joked with him about it when we were in the Richmond Barracks awaiting trial after the Rising and I compared the glorious week we had just been through with going down in a street brawl, but he still held to his view of the affair!

At any rate, following the excitement of that night in 41 Parnell Square, things went along in humdrum fashion for a year or more -

but our lives in those days were very full indeed what with our duties as Volunteers, teaching Gaelic League classes and rehearsing and producing plays in Irish with na hAisteoiri; when I say our lives I refer specially to Gearoid O'Sullivan, Dermot O'Hegarty, Piaras Beaslai and myself.

I should have mentioned that after I was elected Captain of F/Coy., Dermot O'Hegarty was elected to be second Lieut. in my place, and both Sean Shouldice and himself continued as Lieutenants of the Coy. up to and including the Rising.

BATTALION COUNCIL.

Sometime during 1915, Battalion Councils were instituted - certainly in the Dublin area. The Council consisted of the Comdt., Vice Comdt., Adjutant and Quartermaster of the Battalion together with the Captains of the companies in the Battalion. I have already mentioned that Ned Daly became Comdt. of the 1st Battn. with Piaras Beaslai as his Vice-Comdt. As far as I can remember, the late Eamon Duggan became Adjutant and Eamon Morkan Quartermaster. The Battalion Council met weekly and I can only now remember that Frank Fahy, Captain C/Coy. (now Ceann Comhairle of the Dail), Seamus O'Sullivan, Captain of B/Coy., who subsequently married a sister of Ned Daly, and Bob Monteith, Captain of, I think, A/Coy. and Sean Heuston were amongst the Coy. Captains who used to attend.

I have now only a vague recollection of the business transacted at the meetings of the Battn. Council, but I know we arranged parades and manoeuvres for the Battn. and were constantly grouching at the dearth of rifles and ammunition - though, on the whole, most of the men succeeded in equipping themselves fairly well in this respect.

The Battalion manoeuvres were carried out mostly in the North County - Swords, Finglas, etc., but shortly before the Rising, in January or early February 1916, we had a very important rehearsal in the heart of the city, actually over the ground which the Battn. occupied in Easter Week. Sean Heuston was in charge of one half of the Battn. and I was in charge of the other half with the Battalion

Staff acting as referees. These particular manoeuvres were referred to later, I understand, by the detectives who gave evidence before the Commission presided over by Lord Hardinge, which inquired into the Rising.

Sometime towards the end of January or the beginning of Feby. of 1916, the manager of the school in which I taught came to see me at the school, bearing with him a communication from the Commissioners of National Education, informing him that I was an officer in the Irish Volunteers and instructing him that he should inform me that, unless I severed my connection with the Volunteers, my "salary would be withdrawn". I told the Manager that it was quite true I was a member and that when I had consulted my superior officers I should let him know what I should do. I am afraid this attitude was rather a shock to the good manager, but after a little bluster he left matters stand.

TEMPORARY RESIGNATION FROM VOLUNTEERS,

That evening I reported to Sean McDermott, who sent me on to Tom McDonagh, who discussed the position with me. He eventually ordered me to "lie low" for the time being - to sever formally my connection with the Volunteers as there were already crowds of refugees from England on our hands.

At the next meeting of F/Coy. I reported to them all that transpired, and my orders to resign for the time being from the Coy. and I told them that ^{when} there would be "anything doing" they would find me back to lead them.

From then up to the Rising I did not parade with the Company, but at the request of several persons whose positions made it impossible for them to be openly associated with the Volunteers, I, organised a Sunday morning squad training centre at 25 Parnell Sqr. the Gaelic League Headquarters. I feel still that we did very useful work during that period up to the Rising at those Sunday morning meetings, and Liam Archer, now Colonel Liam Archer, Asst. Chief of Staff, helped greatly in that work.

It is a coincidence that, as far as I know, only three teachers in the whole of Ireland were ordered out of the Volunteers, and that those three were Kerry men. Tom Ashe, who taught at Corduff, Lusk, got his notice a few days after I got mine, and Diarmuid O'Connell of Caherciveen, who then taught at Foilmore N.S. near Caherciveen, got his notice about the same time. They were ordered like myself by Volunteer H.Q., to "lie low" and accept the situation for the time being, but both were back in their places for Easter Week - Tom Ashe at Ashbourne and Diarmuid O'Connell brought his men into Tralee to be ready for orders there.

As far as I can remember, I continued during this period to attend the meetings of the Battn. Council. At any rate, I know I was present a week or so before the Rising, for at that meeting I was given the area to be occupied by my company and told by the Comdt. to survey the ground for material for barricades, points of vantage to be occupied, and so on, in good time before Easter Sunday.

I think it must have been at this meeting that we were formally told about the intended Rising, though it was 'in the air' for some time before that and few of us can have had little doubt that a Rising was imminent. At any rate Comdt. Daly ordered all the Company officers present at that last meeting of the Battn. Council to go over the ground to be occupied by their respective companies, and he gave us all explicit instructions as to the area to be occupied by us.

LEADERSHIP OF F/COY. RESUMED.

On Holy Thursday night, I went to the weekly parade of F/Coy. and took over command again. I reminded the men of what I had told them a few months before when leaving them - that when there would be "anything doing" I would be back to lead them. I then said "Well, I am back" and I will ever remember with pride the cheers with which that announcement was greeted. Indeed the most precious memory of my whole life is my association with the grand young men who formed F/Coy. and I am very naturally proud that they elected me their captain.

During the last three or four days before the Rising the excitement was at fever-height, and rumours were rife as to a general round-up by the British, and so on. Somewhere about that time, or perhaps earlier in Holy Week, most of the leaders changed their addresses in order to stay in houses where there were a number of armed volunteers who could resist any attempt at arrest. Sean McDermott came to 44 Mountjoy St. with us; in addition to Gearoid O'Sullivan and myself there were also staying in 44 at that time Mort O'Connell, Clerk of the Dail, Fionan (Floss) O'Doherty and Con Keating, all members of my company. Keating was a wireless operator, and he was drowned when the car in which he was travelling to Ceherciveen went into the Laune at Ballykissane Quay on Easter Saturday 1916.

Tom Clarke took up his abode with the O'Connors of Sherrard St. of which family the father and three sons were Volunteers - John was a Sergeant in my Coy. and is now the wellknown Dublin Solicitor, John S. O'Connor.

Pearse stayed at home at Rathfarnham, but had some Volunteers staying on the premises.

About 5 a.m. on Easter Saturday morning there was a terrific rat-a-tat-tat at our door in Mountjoy St. and we all drew our guns in expectation of a raid. The man at the door, however, was Sean Connolly, killed on the Monday following during the attack on the Castle, and he brought a dispatch to Sean McDermott with regard to Casement's arrest. On Sean's orders Gearoid and myself at once foraged a taxi and drove out to St. Enda's with orders to inform Pearse that he should come at once in the taxi with us to Liberty Hall. We reached St. Enda's about 6 a.m. and, when Pearse had dressed, we brought him to Liberty Hall where conferences went on throughout the day.

I was given the duty of posting a relay of cycle scouts from the Vice-Regal Lodge to Liberty Hall. Indeed, F/Coy. was given a number of duties of that kind owing to Sean McDermott knowing us so well,

and, I say it with justifiable pride, having the greatest confidence in us.

A most unpleasant duty imposed on me at the time was to place a guard over my own I.R.B. Centre, Bulmer Hobson, who was detained by order of the Supreme Council for some days prior to the Rising. My instructions were that he was to be released when the Rising had started. As far as I know, the only reason for Hobson's arrest was that he agreed with MacNeill that a Rising was impossible without German aid and, therefore, when the "Aud" failed to land any substantial share of arms he was opposed to the Rising going ahead at all at that time.

On Easter Sunday morning the Sunday paper carried Eoin MacNeill's cancellation of the "manoeuvres" for that day. Gearoid and myself were at early Mass and we brought back the paper with us to Sean McDermott. It was the first and only time that I saw Sean really angry and upset. I think, myself, that if he and the others, who insisted on carrying on with the Rising, had taken MacNeill more into their confidence, there would have been no such proclamation from MacNeill. While he was titular head of the Volunteers, he was undoubtedly being kept in the dark about many things.

However, this order of MacNeill's meant another day of meetings and the signatories of the Proclamation met all day long, with intervals for meals, in the premises of the Keating Branch of the Gaelic League.

It must have been about midnight on Easter Sunday night that they finished, and we then left the premises for various "digs" as 44 had been visited by the police that day inquiring about Com Keating on whose body the police must have found that address. Gearoid O'Sullivan, whom Sean McDermott appointed his aide-de-camp, went with Sean to Fleming's Hotel. I went with Diarmuid O'Hegarty to his "digs" in St. Peter's Road, Phibsboro, and Floss O'Doherty went with Mick Collins to Rathdown Road, N.C.R. Mort O'Connell stayed in 44, and as nothing happened by way of a raid during the

the night, he had gone well ahead with getting our rifles out of their "cache" in the ceiling of "44" by the time we reached the place on Easter Monday morning.

The first Battalion mobilised that morning in Blackhall Place, I forget now what hall it was, but it was the meeting place of at least one of the companies of the Battalion. The Battalion was somewhat attenuated as one might expect after the countermanding order. Comdt. Daly addressed the men, and after a little while we were ordered to take up our positions in the areas already allotted to us. All the company officers were present and, with the exception of one officer, carried out the orders of the Commandant. This officer said that the whole thing was lunacy, and he left the hall and went home. His name was, I think, Allright, and he had been captain of G/Coy.

I should have mentioned that on Good Friday, accompanied by Sean Shouldice, 1st Lieut. and Diarmuid O'Hegarty, 2nd Lieut. I went over the ground to be occupied by my Coy. We laid all our plans for barricades for the occupation of certain houses within the area, for food supply and for every other eventuality that could be foreseen by us. Hence, we had no difficulty when we got the order to move on Easter Monday. Each of us took up the position we had already decided on; we set up our barricades and occupied houses and vantage points as we had already settled.

There was little fighting in our area until the Wednesday, but from that on until the surrender on Saturday evening the fighting was intense. I do not wish to boast about the valour of my men - I shall merely say that it was a great honour for any man to be their Captain.

As to how they fought, the words of our enemies at the time are the greatest tribute we could ask for - though they did not mean to pay us a tribute, I needn't say. This tribute was paid to us when a statement by Lieut.Colonel H. Taylor, O/C. 2nd/6th South Staffords was read at the inquest on men named Healy and Bealen, civilians who were murdered by the British in the basement of 177 North King St. The statement was by way of excuse for the military excesses in that

area. A report of the inquest will be found in a publication by the "Weekly Irish Times" called "Sinn Fein Rebellion Handbook" at page 211 and on page 212 there is a statement made to the "Daily Mail" by General Sir John Maxwell where he says "The allegations of brutality seem almost exclusively concerned with the fighting in North King St. With the one exception of the place at Ballsbridge, where the Sherwood Foresters were ambushed, this was by far the worst fighting that occurred in the whole of Dublin. At first the troops, coming from one end of the street, were repulsed, and it was only when we made an attack from both ends that we succeeded, after twenty four hours' fighting, in capturing the street. The casualties were very heavy during this fighting"

In combination with Colonel Taylor's description of the fighting in our company area, Sir John Maxwell's statement is the finest tribute that could be paid to my men.

F/Coy. occupied the area from N. King St. along Church St. to May Lane where we were joined to C/Coy. who held the Four Courts.

On Saturday evening, worn out from fighting incessantly for three days, we fell back on the Four Courts and very shortly afterwards the order came for surrender.

Signed: Finian Lynch

Date: _____

Witness: 10th October, 1948.

