

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 315

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 315

Witness

Mr. Seamus Doyle,
Tombrack Wood,
Ferns, Co. Wexford.

Identity

1st Lieutenant 'A' Company
Enniscorthy Battalion Irish Volunteers;
Adjutant Enniscorthy Battalion
Easter Week 1916.

Subject

- (a) National activities 1907-1916;
- (b) Preparations for Rising and events
in Enniscorthy during Easter Week 1916.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil

File No. ... S.386

Form B S M 2

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRE MILCATA 1913-21
No. W.S. 315

STATEMENT BY Mr. SEAMUS DOYLE,

Tombrack Wood, Ferns, County Wexford.

the use of -
RD.

I was always a separatist from the time I reached political reasoning. I think I was born one. Father Philip Roche was a great, great Grand Uncle of mine. I joined the Gaelic League early in 1900. I joined the I.R.B. in Gorey in 1907. Sean Etchingham was Centre there at the time. I cannot remember any of the other members. On joining I took the oath of the I.R.B. and I think we paid a small weekly or monthly subscription towards the funds. I came to Enniscorthy in 1913 and transferred to the Centre there. In Enniscorthy Larry De-Lacey was Centre there. Amongst the members were Seamus Rafter, Pat Keegan, Michael Davis, T.D. Sinnott, Thomas Doyle, a second Thomas Doyle, Tom McCarthy and the two James Cullens.

We paid some small subscription towards expenses and purchase of arms, etc. We had a Police Carbine fitted with a Morris Tube and we had Firing Practice with this out in the country. We also had some ordinary .22 rifles. We also had one Mauser Service Rifle but I don't think we had any ammunition for it. It was very useful, however, for training purposes.

the greater.
RD

In the end of December, 1913, The O'Rahilly and Judge came to Enniscorthy to start the Volunteers. A public meeting was held at which the Volunteers were started. The immediate response was big but by our first parade ~~a~~ number had dropped out. We had about sixty or seventy members. All the younger men of the

/I.R.B.

I.R.B. who were fit to undergo training joined immediately.

On joining the Volunteers we took no oath but made a declaration and I think we were issued with membership cards. We paid a small subscription towards expenses, purchase of arms, and so forth. Our Instructor was an ex-British Army man named Darcy. This man was appointed Recruiting Sergeant for the British Army on the outbreak of the 1914-1918 War. We also had another Instructor named O'Toole. This man rejoined the British Army and was killed in the War. Our principal training was Foot Drill, Route Marches and such like.

As our numbers increased, Companies were formed in John Street, The Shamons and Irish Street. The Companies were known as A, B and C. Companies. Seamus Rafter was appointed in charge of A. Company and I was appointed First Lieutenant. Mr. Keogh, afterwards Senator Keogh, was Second Lieutenant. I cannot remember who the officers of the other Companies were just now. A public appeal for funds to purchase arms was made and as a result of this we were able to purchase about twenty Long Lee Enfield Service Rifles. I don't know from whom or where they were purchased. Those rifles were distributed to the Companies.

A.D.
*After Redmond had forced his nominees on the
Volunteers Executive,*
Colonel Laurence Esmond, a brother of Sir Thomas

Esmond, M.P., was appointed to take charge of the Volunteers in the County Wexford. Colonel Esmond later joined the British Army. After the Gun Running in Howth we received a few of the rifles landed there and also some ammunition for same from Volunteer Headquarters.

/We

We also got about twenty revolvers - small bore weapons - and some ammunition for them. We paid a subscription weekly towards the cost of the rifles and revolvers. A meeting of delegates from all Companies of Volunteers in the County Wexford was held in Enniscorthy. A County Board with Esmonde as Chairman, was appointed to look after the Volunteers in the County. I was appointed Secretary to this Board. I compiled a Register of all the Volunteers in the County. Esmonde also compiled a Register and without collaboration we both got the same figures. There were four thousand Volunteers in the County. This Board never met any more.

A man named Davis was appointed by Headquarters in Dublin as Officer Commanding the Enniscorthy Battalion with the rank of Colonel. Davis was a man of substance in the County and elsewhere and imperialistic in his outlook. The excuse given by Headquarters for this appointment was that he would personally equip the Battalion. I am attaching a letter from Esmond Cotter re this appointment which explains the position. A Battalion committee with a representative from each Company was also set up.

N.D.
In Consequence of Redmond's speech at Woodlawnbridge,
We of the I.R.B. knew that there would be a split in the ranks and we tried to force this before the Hibernian influence could get too strong. A meeting of the Battalion Committee was called, but the Redmond element had no instructions from their side and asked for a postponement. We of the I.R.B. agreed to this provided that no Volunteer would take part in a meeting which had been called for Wexford by John Redmond. Davis, however, ordered the Volunteers to parade at this meeting and all except "A" Company, which was the I.R.B. element, paraded and attended the meeting. This brought the split in the

/Battalion

Battalion to a head. About fifty of "A" Company remained loyal. Shannon Company remained neutral, coming back to us later. John Street and Irish Street also came with us. All told we had about 60% of our original strength. We lost some of our arms but succeeded in getting them back during Easter Week.

The Redmond Volunteers continued to function until Easter Week 1916 when some of them joined us. All the officers who were appointed remained loyal with few exceptions. Seamus Rafter was now appointed Officer Commanding the Battalion. I was appointed acting Adjutant and Patrick Keegan Quartermaster. Later a Brigade Headquarters was appointed. Sean Sinnott was appointed Officer Commanding and the Vice-Commandant was Brennan-Whitmore who was later replaced by Paul Galligan. Robert Brennan was Brigade Quartermaster. I was appointed Brigade Adjutant early in 1916.

The Brigade comprised the Enniscorthy Battalion, a good Company in Ferns and Companies in Wexford, Ballymurrin, Ballindaggin. There were other small units throughout the county but all units outside Enniscorthy were generally small in numbers. Sean Sinnott was O.C. Wexford Company as well as Brigade Officer Commanding. Sean Etchingham was in charge in Gorey, Thomas Rafter in Ballindaggin, ^{W.J. Brennan, Whitmore} Patrick ~~Brennan~~ in Ferns and Walter Cummins, I think, in Ballymurrin.

A.D. + Philip Lennon in new Ross

In 1915 Liam Mellows was ordered by the British Authorities to leave Ireland. He came down to Courtown Harbour but was arrested by the R.I.C. and deported. The same year Sean O'Hegarty was ordered to leave Cork by the authorities. He came to Enniscorthy and stayed with Larry-De-Lacey in Weafer Street.

/When

When the British authorities issued a proclamation to the people instructing them what to do in case of a German invasion, i.e., to move inland, burn all food and fodder left behind and so forth, O'Hegarty, on de Lacey's instruction, made out a counter proclamation telling the people not to move, that the Germans would come as friends and would pay for what they took. A large number of copies of this, all in his handwriting, were posted up all over the area.

The R.I.C. succeeded in identifying O'Hegarty's very characteristic handwriting and later charged him over this. He was defended by Tim Healy and to our surprise found not guilty. Bolger, who lodged in de Lacey's house, was also arrested, but was released without trial.

A considerable number of Casement's pamphlet "Ireland, Germany and the freedom of the seas" had been secretly printed in the "Echo" office and stored in de Lacey's house. When the R.I.C. entered the house to arrest O'Hegarty, although they discovered a quantity of explosives, they did not find these pamphlets. We had them removed to an unoccupied house out in the country at a place called Oulartleigh, by an I.R.B. man named Thomas Murphy, who lived in that district. A message was sent to Dublin that the pamphlets were available, and Diarmuid Lynch came down and brought them to Dublin. Eventually they were distributed to public bodies in envelopes bearing the overprint of well-known business premises. Some of those firms were very indignant about their names being used as a means for distributing seditious, and offered rewards for any information that would lead to the identification of those responsible.

A munitions factory on a small scale was established at Keegan's in Irish Street. The making of buckshot and the filling of cartridges was done here. A large amount of pike heads were produced. This was done at Cleary's, who was a blacksmith, and without payment.

I was aware through I.R.B. circles at this time that a Rising was planned, but I had no idea when it would take place. Pearse held a review of the Volunteers at Vinegar Hill and made a speech, the manuscript of which is in the National Museum.

I was from this date a member of the Executive Council, this appointment having the Brigade approval.

In early March, 1916, there was an incident in Tullamore where police fired on some Volunteers in the Volunteer Hall, a number of Volunteers being subsequently arrested. This came up for discussion at a meeting of the Executive held shortly afterwards. Eoin McNeill was deputed to draw up a statement for publication in the Press concerning this. When it was completed and approved by the Executive Council, Terence McSweeney and Sean McDermott were directed to bring it to the newspaper offices. McSweeney asked me to go with him which I did. We went to the "Freeman's Journal", but the editor was not there. We then went to the "Irish Independent". The editor, Mr. Harrington, refused to publish it. The "Evening Mail" I think was the only paper which published it. I cannot now remember the contents of the document but it should be available in the files of the "Evening Mail."

A concert was held in Enniscorthy in early March 1916 in connection with the Emmet Commemoration which Pearse attended. A letter from Pearse regarding this concert is attached which you can copy. At this concert Pearse read what is known as "Tone's Gospel", everybody in the audience standing while he did so. After the concert Pearse told me that the Insurrection was near at hand and arranged a code with me to signify that the orders for the Rising were to be put into force. He did not discuss any plans but told me to go on with our preparations. By now we had succeeded in getting four or five long Lee Enfield Rifles from Joe Gleeson in Liverpool. They came by boat and train and were not interfered with. Rafter paid for these as well as uniforms and many other things.

/ ~~Quill~~

Quite a lot of our men had uniforms by Easter 1916.
Up to Easter activities were getting more intensive.

On Holy Thursday morning I received an order from
Pearse in code as follows :- "Brown and Nolans tell
me that they will have the books you require on the 23rd
July next. Remember 3 months earlier". When Pearse
was arranging a code with me he asked if I was interested
in some subject. I replied I was interested in books.
He then told me he would send me a message with a date in
it regarding books and when I got this message I was to
count back three months from that date. This would be
the date to start operations. The last part of his
message "Remember 3 months earlier" was to remind me of
this arrangement and was in clear.

Brigade Commandant also got a similar order. The
med. ^{AD}
Mrs. E.
O'Hanrahan took this message from Pearse to me and later
the same day a directive from G.H.Q. also arrived which in
effect countermanded Pearse's order and later again a
message arrived from Kilkenny by motor cyclist to state
that as a result of the directive from G.H.Q. that day
they were not "rising".

At this time it had been arranged that Kilkenny,
Waterford and Wexford were to act as one unit under the
command of Captain O'Connell. I cannot remember how or
when this arrangement about O'Connell taking charge was
made. O'Connell's appointment was made by G.H.Q. A
conference of the officers of the Enniscorthy Battalion
was held that evening. Seamus Rafter, I think Paul
Galligan and myself were amongst those present. I was
directed to proceed to Wexford to put the whole matter of
orders before Sean Sinnott. I saw Sinnott and Bob
Brennan and discussed the matter with them. They were

/also

also very confused about what to do. It was finally decided that I should go to Dublin on Good Friday morning and have the situation cleared up.

I proceeded by rail to Dublin on Good Friday. On arrival there I went to Tom Clarke's shop in Parnell Street but I found it closed, it being a Bank Holiday. I next went to Volunteer Headquarters in Dawson Street. Barney Mellows was the only one there that I knew. McNeill came in accompanied by Thomas McDonagh. Some one suggested I should interview McNeill. I did not do so and instead I went to ~~the~~ "Freedom Office" in D'Olier Street. I saw Sean McDermott there, also Gearoid O'Sullivan and Dr. Ryan. When I arrived McDermott was about to send an order to O'Connell in Cork directing him to proceed to Wexford to take up his command. I saw this order and it was signed by McNeill. McDermott asked me if there was any chance of we getting a Wireless Transmitter and Receiver. I said I thought I could. He then gave me the call signals for the different areas. "Luain" was for Athlone, "Liam" for Mellows. We were "Main". There were others which I forget now. He told me that McNeill had consented to the Rising taking place on Easter Sunday. I asked him if there was a possibility of a German landing taking place. He gave me to understand that the chances of such were very slight. I asked if there was a landing to send us some German officers. However at this time I felt myself that there would not be any landing. I then went to the Hermitage, Rathfarnham. McDermott sent a man named Luke Kennedy with me to show me the way. Pearse was not there but I saw Miss Pearse. She said her brother was out but that if I had any message I could give it to her as she knew all.

I travelled back to Enniscorthy that evening satisfied that everything was going well and sent this information around the other officers. On Saturday we issued orders for the mobilisation to take place at mid-day on Easter Sunday. This was for the Enniscorthy Battalion. The Battalion were to parade carrying all equipment and two days' rations. Outlying units were to come into the town later. I advised all the men that I could contact to go to the Sacraments. A large number of Volunteers did so and on Sunday morning it was rather significant all the men that received Holy Communion. On Sunday morning we were all making preparations for mobilisation. When the "Sunday Independent" arrived in the town it contained McNeill's countermanding order which plunged us into a state of confusion again. Captain O'Connell and Dr. Dundon of Borris arrived. Captain O'Connell seemed to be also in a state of confusion and uncertain what to do. I went to Wexford to see Sinnott. I do not remember if O'Connell came with me. I think he returned to Borris with Dr. Dundon. After conferring with Sinnott, it was agreed to postpone action and await developments.

When I returned to Enniscorthy that evening there was a message for me and also one for Dr. Dundon. This message was from Pearse and was an order postponing the Rebellion. This gave me the impression that the Rising had been called off. A man named Sheehan brought this message. The following morning (Easter Monday) I went to Borris with the message for Dr. Dundon. I found Dr. Dundon, O'Connell and Miss Nancy Wyse-Power in the sitting-room of Dr. Dundon's house. I gave Dr. Dundon the dispatch which was similar to the one I had got on Sunday. They read it and O'Connell said "This makes

/things

things alright", I said. "Why, have you got another one?" I suspected Miss Power had brought one down. They said they had and that it stated that the Rising ^{was to} would start at noon on Easter Monday and that we would carry out our orders. I said there must be a message for me in Enniscorthy and that I had better get back there. Captain O'Connell said, "I suppose I can tell Miss Power to tell them they cannot expect any help from us." I said "No" "I cannot make any decision until I see my brother officers". I left and came back to Enniscorthy and found the dispatch awaiting me. It was brought by Miss E. O'Hanrahan. It read "We start at noon to-day. Carry out your orders" and was signed P. H. Pearse. I called a conference of the officers in Enniscorthy and discussed the matter. This was on Monday evening. O'Connell had arrived from Borris and was present. The conference decided that I should again go to Wexford and see the Brigade Commander. O'Connell and I went to Wexford and ^{saw} ~~seen~~ the Brigade Commander and Quartermaster. The Brigade Commander (Sinnott) said that in consequence of the conflicting orders he would not have anything to do with the matter. Brennan ~~also decided not to turn~~ out. We remained in Brennan's house until the night train from Dublin, which was very late, arrived. Brennan went to the Station and heard from the train crew that the train had left Dublin by permission of the Volunteers and that the Volunteers were in possession of the city. O'Connell and I returned to Enniscorthy early on Tuesday morning and found a number of the officers and men waiting at the munitions dump. O'Connell asked us not to make any move until he went around the area to find out what the remainder were doing. We agreed to this proposition. On Wednesday he came back with the news

/that

Said he would
turn out if nobody
else did.

STO.

that the remainder of the area were not turning out. He stated he was not prepared to take any action either and he then left Enniscorthy. In the meantime Paul Galligan who had been in Dublin had returned by then and was present when O'Connell intimated his decision to us. On Wednesday night a conference of the Brigade was held at which all officers were present except Sinnott. Galligan had a message from Connolly which he delivered to us. This was to the effect that we were to prevent troops coming through to Dublin from Rosslare.

It was decided by all to start operations on Thursday morning. The Volunteers were mobilised in the early hours of Thursday morning and we took over the town hall for headquarters and for billets. The mobilisation was effective about 5 or 6 a.m. on Thursday morning. Our effective fighting strength was approximately one hundred and fifty (150), that was what was reliable and what we had arms for. Our total strength was much greater and we were besieged by men wanting to join. They became a problem to feed and billet. All publichouses in the town were closed down and guards were posted on the Banks. All supplies were commandeered, a receipt being given for all articles so taken. Roads were blocked in all directions and fighting patrols were kept constantly on them. We also took over the Castle for billets. The R.I.C. were confined to their barracks and all supplies of gas and water cut off from them. All motor cars and cycles in shops were seized.

The Tricolour was hoisted on Headquarters with due ceremony, a Guard of Honour under Paul Galligan rendering the compliments. Bob Brennan, ~~who had mobilised~~, took

Bob /over

over the command. He was the senior Brigade officer. I was appointed Adjutant. Paul Galligan was appointed operations officer. Bob Brennan also acted as quartermaster. Pat Keegan looked after the armaments and Michael de Lacey looked after supplies. Phil Murphy took charge of recruits and R.F. King was in charge of scouting operations.

I issued a proclamation, proclaiming the Republic, and calling on the people to support it and defend it. The railway line was destroyed outside the town on the Wexford side and the train which used to convey workers to Kynoch's Munitions Factory in Arklow was prevented from running. About midnight on Wednesday, two or three men were sent out to reconnoitre the railway line towards Wexford. They were surprised by the RIC. and one of them named John Tompkins was captured. He was courtmartialled and got penal servitude.

On Thursday morning two Volunteers named Thomas Doyle and Richard Donoghue exchanged shots with an R.I.C. man who was trying to contact the District Inspector who lived some distance from the R.I.C. Bks. They were arrested after the surrender, courtmartialled and sentenced to penal servitude. On Thursday also an attempt was made to destroy the railway and bridge at "Eddermine". The railway was destroyed, but the bridge was not destroyed, probably due to lack of experience on behalf of the men who were carrying out the operation.

Feeling in the town was generally friendly towards us excepting the families of some British Army soldiers. Rumours about British forces advancing on the town and also of German landings were abundant. One of our patrols came in touch with a British patrol from Arklow at "Scarrowalsh". As a result of this it was decided to occupy the village of Ferns. This decision was taken on Friday night. This was to act as a buffer against an attack by the British army garrison at Arklow or British troops from the north. Paul Galligan took charge personally of the party which occupied Ferns.

On Saturday night the administrator of the Catholic Parish of Enniscorthy sent for me and talked to me about the hopelessness of our cause and tried to convince me to give up our effort. He made no impression on me. Later, a deputation headed by him and consisting of the business men in the town interviewed us with the same object, but without result. This deputation asked permission to go to Wexford to see the Commander of the British troops there. They were allowed to go. They returned to

Enniscorthy with the news of the surrender in Dublin. Some of the Cumann na mBan girls had been into Wexford previous to this and had informed us that there was a large number of British troops in Wexford.

The Cumann na mBhan had given great assistance in cooking and looking after the welfare of the men in general. Miss White was in charge and all were so good that I would not care to mention any individuals.

We did not believe about the surrender in Dublin when the information was brought to us by the deputation. It was decided that the best thing to do was for one of us to surrender to Colonel French in Wexford and with his permission travel to Dublin to seek confirmation. This proposition was conveyed to Colonel French who agreed and suggested that two officers should travel to Dublin. Etchingham and I travelled to Wexford on a pass supplied by Colonel French. The British had an outpost and guard at Ferrycarrig. On our arrival there their guard turned out and presented arms to us. They passed us through to Wexford but unfortunately for us kept our pass. On arrival in Wexford we reported to the R.I.C. Barracks where we were put under arrest and lodged in a cell in the barracks. Colonel French, however, came down from the military barracks and had us released, and conveyed to Dublin under escort of two officers who sat in front of the military car and a cadet between us in the rear seat. Our intention was to see Pearse personally.

On arrival in Dublin we were brought to the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham, and from there to Arbour Hill Prison. A second car-load of officers accompanied us from Kilmainham to Arbour Hill. We were admitted to Pearse's cell in the prison. One soldier entered the cell with us.

The officers made no attempt to do so. Pearse was lying on a mattress in the cell covered by his greatcoat. He was still in uniform but without his Sam Brown belt. His rank markings were still on his tunic. His hat and a bit of hard biscuit were on a little table inside the door. He rose quickly when the door was opened and came forward to meet us and shook hands with us. He appeared to be physically exhausted but spiritually exultant. He told us that the Dublin Brigade had done splendidly - five days and nights of continuous fighting. He told us that the O'Rahilly had been killed fighting in Moore Street and Captain Thomas Weafer had also been killed. Etchingham said to him. "Why did you surrender"? Pearse answered "Because they were shooting women and children in the streets. I saw them myself". I asked him did he know we were out. He said he did not. I then asked him to put the order for surrender in writing for me. Pearse asked for a pen and paper which the soldier got immediately. He then wrote the order to surrender and signed it and gave it to the soldier to show to the officers outside. The soldier did so and brought it back to us in the cell. While the soldier was out of the cell Pearse whispered to us "Hide the arms, they will be wanted later". We then bid him goodbye. As we did so I said to him "We will soon meet again I suppose". He looked at me but said nothing. Although he seemed very tired his morale seemed to be very high and he gave me the impression he was well satisfied with what had happened.

We returned to Wexford where we saw Colonel French. He asked us did we get what we wanted. We said we did. We got into our own car and returned to Enniscorthy.

/Colonel

Colonel French did not discuss surrender with us. On arrival in Enniscorthy a conference of officers was called. The order was received with mixed opinions but finally it was decided to obey the order. The decision arrived at was that the officers would surrender if the men were allowed to go free. The civilian deputation went to Wexford to Colonel French with this offer and returned and gave us the impression that Colonel French agreed to this and that he would take our surrender at 2 p.m. the following day.

We called in all our outposts and sentries and I read the order to our garrison. This was about midnight. The men then disbanded taking their arms with them which they disposed of individually. Some of the men wanted to carry on and to take to the hills. The officers all remained except Paul Galligan who had not reported back with his men from Ferns. He had become involved in a car accident on his way in.

Colonel French arrived with a party of soldiers at 4 p.m.. He took our surrender and handed us over to the R.I.C. in Wexford where we spent that night in the ^{old} ~~R.I.C.~~ Barracks. Sean Sinnott joined us as a prisoner that night. We were brought to Waterford jail the following day by an R.I.C. escort. The jail was soon full of Enniscorthy men. The Redmond Volunteers of Waterford were doing guard over us in the jail. We received ordinary prison fare in regard to food which was bad. For bedding we had bed boards, a mattress and some blankets.

The following Saturday we were transferred by train to Dublin under an R.I.C. escort and lodged in the Richmond Barracks, Dublin. We were put in the Gymnasium

/which

which was full of Enniscorthy men. No beds were supplied here. I think we got one blanket. We had to lie on the bare floor. There were no sanitary arrangements except buckets placed around the walls. For food we were given tea and hard biscuits. On the following day, Sunday, we were transferred to a barrack room. All the officers were picked out and put in a basement room. In that room I can remember Bob Brennan, Sean Etchingham, Michael De Lacey, Seamus Rafter, R.F. King, Gearoid O'Sullivan and Conor McGinley were also in that room.

Some time during the day we saw a parade of prisoners on the Barrack Square getting ready for deportation. Sean McDermott was picked out from this party by Detectives and brought into our room. He was in good form and was quite aware of his fate and seemed happy to die. On the Good Friday previously when I was saying goodbye to McDermott I had said to him "If we don't meet again in this world I hope we will in the next". He said "We will meet again in this." He reminded me of this when he came into the barrack room.

A better one.

MD.

During the night he called us - the Enniscorthy officers aside, and told us the story about the landing of the arms. He told us that after the arrangements had been made for landing the arms in Kerry they discovered that a timber merchant in Limerick was agreeable to take the whole consignment as a cargo of timber at the Docks in Limerick. A messenger was dispatched to Germany to make this new arrangement. They knew that this messenger got as far as Berne but that was the last they had heard of him. He did not, or I cannot remember, state who this messenger was.

I think it was the next day McDermott was courtmartialled. He did not return after his courtmartial. The following week we were courtmartialled in bulk. Major General Sandbach was president of the Court. The charges were read to us and we pleaded not guilty. The District Inspector of the R.I.C., Enniscorthy, was the principal witness against us. We made no statements. After the courtmartial we were removed to Kilmainham Jail. While in Kilmainham McDermott and Connolly were executed. We heard the volleys of shots which sent them to the next world. After some days in Kilmainham we were told our sentences. Our group was Death - commuted to Penal Servitude for five years. From there we were removed to Mountjoy and placed in cells and rigged out in prison garb. De Valera was a prisoner there then. Conditions were the ordinary prison standard. The warders were more or less sympathetic towards us.

After some days in Mountjoy we were taken to the North Wall and put aboard a cattle boat under an escort of the Notts and Derby Regiment. On this boat was also Tom Ashe and the two Lawless brothers from Saucerstown, Swords. We were issued with bully beef and biscuits for our journey. We were taken by boat to Hollyhead and thence by train to Plymouth and on to Dartmoor Prison. Before leaving Mountjoy our uniforms were re-issued to us and we travelled in them to Dartmoor. In Dartmoor we were put in single cells and re-issued with convict clothing. Fare was the usual prison type and was bad. We were issued with mattresses for our plank beds. At certain times of the day we were exercised in the exercise rings but no intercourse of any nature was allowed between prisoners. We were very hungry - so

/hungry

hungry that we picked up and eat all the crumbs that fell on the floor.

In December of 1916 we were transferred to Lewes Jail. De Valera, Dr. Hayes and Desmond Fitzgerald, who had been transferred to Maidstone Jail previously, rejoined us in Lewes. We were put in cells with a prisoner from Portland in every alternative cell. This was really stupid as those prisoners were our own fellows. Conditions were better in Lewes. We were allowed to talk during exercise. Food was also better. Discipline on the whole was lax here. On Whit Sunday we went on strike. We had concluded that the British Government was representing to the world outside that we were not being treated as convicts, which we were. We broke the windows and did a lot of damage. We were confined to our cells and allowed no exercise. We were taken from Lewes and broken into parties and sent to different jails. I was sent to Maidstone arriving there on Saturday. On Sunday morning we were brought out for exercise before Mass. We refused to exercise with ordinary criminal prisoners and, as a result, were not allowed to go to Mass. De Valera was here - he had been doing bread and water punishment. He talked to me and was put back in the cell for this. I was allowed to go to Benediction. On Monday we were all paraded before the Governor and given three days' solitary confinement. On Thursday we got three days bread and water for refusing to work. The work was sewing mail bags. Our beds were also taken from us.

The following Saturday I was told by the Chaplain as a secret that we were being released. After dinner that day we were paraded at the Governor's office and told we were being released. He made a speech to us about being good boys in the future. That night we were

were transferred to Pentonville Jail. Here we were locked in cells which were infested with bugs. The following day we were fitted with civilian clothes and a packet of cigarettes. Sunday evening we were driven to Euston Station and put on the Irish Mail for Dublin.

We arrived in Dún Laoghaire on Monday morning. At Westland Row we got a tumultous reception. There was a big change in the outlook of the people now. Their sympathy was with us now completely. I travelled back to Enniscorthy where we got another wonderful reception. When this was over I returned home.

Signed: Seumas Doyle

Date: 12-10-49

Witness: Maude Barry Commandant.

Date: 12-10-49

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