

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRÉ MILÉATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 337

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 337.....

Witness

Mr. Daniel Tuibe,
1 Murphy's Terrace,
Castletown Road,
Dundalk, Co. Louth.

Identity

Member of Irish Volunteers
Dundalk, 1914 -.

Subject

- (a) Training of Irish Volunteers, Dundalk,
1908-1916;
- (b) March of Dundalk Volunteers towards Dublin,
Easter Week 1916;
- (c) Their arrest and imprisonment.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil

File No. ...S.1380.....

Form B.S.M. 2.

ORIGINALSTATEMENTBYDANIEL TUITE

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1, Murphy's Terrace, Castletown Road,
Dundalk, County Louth.

I am about 61 years of age. In 1908 I was working in Newry. I attended Sinn Fein lectures and meetings in Newry. This was the first nationalist organisation I was associated with.

I joined the Volunteers in Dundalk in 1914. Paddy Hughes seemed to be in charge when I joined. There were two Companies in Dundalk then. John Finnegan joined A Company of which I was a member. Sean MacEntee was an officer in one of the Companies.

We drilled in the "Rink" at the Athletic Grounds. We did not do much open-air parading in the early days of the Volunteers. I remember a meeting in the Athletic Grounds when a section of the Volunteers, including Paddy Hughes, announced they would not be associated with the others who were also in the Volunteers at the time. The people who used the Athletic Grounds after this meeting were Hibernians and others who were not Sinn Fein in politics. A man named McGuirke, an ex-British soldier, was training the Hibernians then and seemed in charge.

When the Sinn Fein element in the Volunteers broke away from the original Volunteers I went with them and we set up our Headquarters in the Boyle-O'Reilly Hall. We were known then as the "Irish Volunteers". We drilled and trained in the Boyle-O'Reilly Hall. Any arms we had before the "Split" with the Hibernian supporters were lost to us and in the Boyle-O'Reilly Hall we had practically no arms.

About the end of 1915 we had 80 to 90 men in the Irish Volunteers. I don't remember ever having a rifle in my hands for drill or training purposes before the end of 1915. There may have been rifles available in the Hall but I never seen them. I don't remember us having shot guns then. I don't think we had many revolvers at the end of 1915. Our training was mostly close order work, forming fours, etc. I don't remember us going for any route marches before the end of 1915.

As far as I can remember the National (Hibernian) Volunteers continued drilling in the Athletic Grounds after we broke from them. I don't remember they interfering with us after the "split".

About the end of the first week in March, 1916, I was going up the street with James Toal to a football match in the Athletic Grounds when we saw on the other side of the street Paddy Hughes and another man whom I subsequently knew as Domhnall O'Hannigan. James Toal told me that the two men we saw were going to the Boyle-O'Reilly Hall and he would have to turn back with them. Toal at this time was a member of the Volunteer Committee in Dundalk. The Committee, after O'Hannigan's arrival in town, consisted of Paddy Hughes, Domhnall O'Hannigan, James Toal, John Finnegan, Sean MacEntee and Paddy McHugh.

O'Hannigan was sent down by Headquarters in Dublin to take charge of the training of the Dundalk Volunteers. O'Hannigan attended the Hall nearly every night and gave us a lot of drilling and training. Any night I attended drills I saw no arms and we did not, as far as I can remember, get any arms drill or instructions in the use of arms.

About the time O'Hannigan came to Dundalk we got an idea that there was going to be fighting of some kind soon but we did not know anything definite. On Holy Saturday night at a parade in the Boyle-O'Reilly Hall we got orders for the mobilisation on Easter Sunday morning after 8 a.m. Mass. We were to have a feed before mobilising. We mobilised on the street opposite the Hall. Some of the men had arms on this mobilisation. I did not see much arms at the mobilisation but when we marched off up the Ardee Road to the Workhouse at Ballybarrack we were joined by another contingent of the Dundalk Volunteers. Some of these Volunteers carried arms especially the men from Kilkearley locality. I saw a fair number of rifles amongst the men then. I had no arms then. All the men carried rifles for at least one day. There were a few jarveys with horse cars along with us. There were about 70 men marched from Ballybarrack.

We marched out the Ardee Road and during the march we made use of the cars by taking short rides alternatively on them. There was only accommodation on the cars for about a quarter of the men marching.

When we arrived in Ardee we were halted in military formation and remained standing there for about a half hour. Paddy Hughes and Domhnall O'Hannigan were walking about in our vicinity. Later Hughes and O'Hannigan came to us with rifles and distributed them to some of the men. I was handed one of the rifles and a quantity of ammunition. The ammunition was loose and I put it in my pockets. I got about 20 rounds of ammunition. I knew how to load the rifle but I had got no rifle drill before the rifle was handed out to me. I was not told to load the rifle. About 9 men joined us in Ardee from Dunleer district.

D.J.

From Ardee we marched in the direction of Collon, through Collon and when about half way between Collon and Slane we stopped on the roadside for a rest. When resting Sean MacEntee came to me and asked me if I would like to go back to Dundalk. He told me he knew I was working for Mr. McDonald, Contractor, and that the Volunteers would not be proceeding much further that evening. I told him that I would remain with the Volunteers and do whatever the main body did. He did not tell me anything about the countermanding order which I now know he carried to the point at which we were resting. I saw a good many of the Volunteers going home at this point. When we resumed our march towards Slane we had 40 to 45 men remaining. I heard that some of the men who left us were asked to do some work in Dundalk, mostly in the line of dispatch work, for Miss Matthews or dispatches left at the Boyle-O'Reilly Hall.

We arrived in Slane about dark that evening. We had a feed in Slane in relays as the house where we got the food could not accommodate many of us. When in Slane we were accompanied by Sergeants Wymes and Connolly. Both of these men were with us continually from we left Dundalk. We remained in Slane moving about in groups for a time. We had a feeling that matters were at sixes and sevens. The whole outlook was uncertain and we were just waiting to see what we would be told to do.

Whilst we were waiting in Slane late at night, Sean MacEntee left us. Shortly after he went away we were forming up again in military formation and marched back in the direction of Collon. It was raining very heavily on our journey to Collon. From Collon we took the road for Dunleer, marched through Dunleer where the Dunleer men left

us and the Dundalk men continued on through Castlebellingham on to Lurgangreen four miles from Dundalk. At this place Sean MacEntee met us on a motor bicycle coming from Dundalk and told us the Rising was on in Dublin. We were ordered by O'Hannigan to go back again in the direction of Dublin. Fairryhouse Races were on that day. Some of the racegoers were at this time returning home in motor cars. We stopped all conveyances on the road and commandeered all motor cars. We made prisoners of the two R.I.C. Sergeants. All the occupants of the cars we commandeered were taken out and for a time were held as prisoners. We made all the drivers stay with the cars. Volunteers took over the commandeered cars and we all started for Dublin. We were ordered to travel to Dublin by Slane direction. I had a seat on Thomas Hearty's horse-car and all the horse-cars started in Dublin direction before the motor cars left Lurgangreen. When we arrived in Castlebellingham we passed through the village and I think we took across the country from the Drogheda Road for Collon. We were a long bit of the road from Castlebellingham when the Motor cars overtook us. The motor cars passed us and moved off quickly without stopping. Our jarveys had to follow the motor cars as best they could aided for some time by the lights of the motor cars. Near Dunshaughlin we overtook some of the motor cars. The driver of one of the cars ran into a conveyance and blocked the road on the cars following, and when we came up to the men with the overturned car and a few cars that were following it at the time they were endeavouring to remove the obstruction. The other motor cars which preceded the obstructing car had gone ahead as they did not realise that anything had gone wrong. We got Ordnance Survey maps from one of the cars and we tried to locate our position on the map. We were directed to a barn by O'Hannigan. There were about 20 of us now together. We lost all touch with the men who travelled on the foremost cars. Amongst the men

who went to this barn in Dunshaughlin were O'Hannigan, Paddy Hughes and Paddy McHugh. We remained in the barn until daylight. We had removed our supplies from the cars before we left them. As far as I can remember Tom Hearty had returned from Dunshaughlin with his horse and car. Hearty was an old man at this time and Paddy Hughes prevailed on him to go home from there. We remained in the empty barn for some time. We were so weary and exhausted that we lay down and tried to sleep. We left the barn under cover of darkness with scouts covering our advance. Marching all night we arrived at Tyrellstown House about 9 miles from Dublin City. We took possession of the outhouses attached to the place and were joined by a company of Dunboyne volunteers. Those Dunboyne men had previously attempted to get into Dublin city but had to return as their route there was blocked by a British Lancer Regiment. After a few words from P. Hughes and D. O'Hannigan we and the Dunboyne men became friends. We settled down in our Billets. Cooking utensils were procured, cooks, orderlies, guards, etc. appointed, outposts manned day and night guarding approaches to the house. We had to commandeer food growing on the farm - such supplies as sheep, poultry and a pig or two were slaughtered. We had no eating utensils. Slates were used to replace plates as in "Stone Age" times. Some girls came into our camp to help us with the cooking. Those girls cooked, sewed, and cycled 4 to 5 miles to other farm houses to procure bread and other necessities for us. They also carried important messages to and from Dublin.

During the days at Tyrellstown all our men not employed on guard duty received instructions in Drill and Rifle practice. Scouts came to us with reports they picked up of events in Dublin which proved later was much better than events deserved which however tended to keep up our spirits. When on guard

duty we could hear the heavy firing from the gun boats shelling Dublin. When Sunday came there was no Mass for us. The Rosary was recited every night. Our strength all told - Louth and Dunboyne men in Tyrellstown House was about 60 men. We were daily waiting for word to advance to Dublin or otherwise. When we were about 5 days in the place reports of an alarming kind came to us. We knew then that it was impossible to get into Dublin and dangerous to remain where we were. Word was brought to us that the Soldiers were to attack us in Tyrellstown House that very night - 1st May. Our leaders, knowing the folly of trying to defend the place with the men and arms at our disposal decided to evacuate. We quickly and silently mustered, collected every thing belonging to us that we could carry and started on our long journey through fields across hedges and rivers plodding along without complaint. We had a guide who knew the country. He did not dare to take us the direct way we were travelling but roundabout routes to baffle the soldiers who we expected were following us. We stopped occasionally to listen for sounds of persuers. At those stops D. O'Hannagan would count us as we filed past him and when he satisfied himself that "all was correct" we proceeded. Our progress was slow, getting over or through hedges, etc. encumbered as we were by rifles and equipment in the darkness. We avoided gates and roads as much as possible. At some of the deep drains we got across by means of planks. The country we were crossing was all big ranch land and houses were a great distance apart. We were beginning to get very fatigued and it seemed that we could go little further when we saw a light in a house. We proceeded to the house and were delighted to find that it was the house of one of the girls who had been so helpful to us during our stay in Tyrellstown House. We were welcomed with kindness by the occupants who knew by this time that the "Cause" was lost;

that mothers in a short time would see their sons arrested, sisters lose their brothers, but they welcomed us. Heaps of bread was baked ready for us, pots of tea prepared and after a short time we had a welcome feed. We thanked our good friends and hurriedly bade them good bye and resumed our march to get as far as possible during darkness. It was on leaving this house we parted with the Dunboyne men. We had not gone far on our resumed march when we found out that we were close to our former camping place, the old Barn we had occupied on our journey to Tyrellstown House. Some of us suggested that we should go there and rest awhile but Paddy Hughes knowing the great danger of delay under the circumstances decided to keep going. Our guide, who had the instinct of "an Indian" and never once led us astray, now left the road and we entered a dense wood. Our progress here was slow but we came out on the other side to flat open country. Our guide here pointed out to us a farm cottage and we staggered towards it. When we arrived at the cottage our guide told us it belonged to him, was unoccupied and could accommodate us all. We were not long in the cottage when we were all fast asleep. After a few hours sleep we got up again, we all looked deplorable objects. Our hands and clothes torn with wire and hedges we passed through the previous night, our boots filled with mud and our legs soaked to the knees from wading through streams. Our guide got a fire going. He procured food and after a feed we did not feel so bad - over a smoke we could even laugh at the hardships of the previous night's march. About mid-day a messenger brought us the alarming news that the British at daylight that morning had surrounded Tyrellstown House and when they found it vacant had come after us to the old Barn and not finding us there were searching the surrounding district. We later got a message that the soldiers were coming in the direction of the cottage where we were resting.

We made preparations to receive them by taking up positions for defence. We waited in expectancy of what was to come but God was on our side as the soldiers passed along the main road and the cottage where we waited was, only a few hundred yards from where they passed, on a bye road.

After the soldiers passed we gathered around our leader Paddy Hughes to discuss what should now be done. He, poor fellow, advised a general disbandment for all who desired to go before it was too late. We all agreed to his decision. About 4 p.m. that evening after dumping our arms and equipment we started to move off in batches of six or seven to try for home as best we could. There were a few of our men decided to remain and go with Paddy Hughes and share his fate. About 6 p.m. a comrade and I took leave of Paddy Hughes and we started for home. We kept to the highroad all through and travelled late into the night. It was threatening rain and very dark. My comrade took a weak turn and lay down. This would be about 2 a.m. After a short time my comrade to whom I could give little help said he was feeling better and we again started off but had to travel much slower. We were tottering for loss of sleep and fatigue. I had to help my comrade along. When daylight came we decided to keep going and did so. We arrived to within 6 miles of Drogheda. We were warned before we left our last resting place that the bridges near Drogheda were guarded by the British so to avoid capture we turned left about 2 miles south of Drogheda which led us near the town by a back way. We did not enter the town as our appearance would give us away. We went into a roadside shed to rest for a few hours. About 8 a.m. we arranged to move into town, one of us going in advance of the other. I travelled in front and I first saw about procuring a feed for both of us. When my companion arrived we were able to go to the place I had arranged for a feed and have a good breakfast.

We had a wash up and brushed our clothes. We remained in Drogheda about 2 hours and after meeting a friend we knew who told us that delaying in Drogheda was dangerous we left the town avoiding the main road, I going first. When about 2 miles North of Drogheda I waited until my comrade came up with me and we proceeded together. We passed a few inns but did not stop. We purchased some food and came to near Dunleer on our left. We went to a friend's house near here for food and a rest. On our way to the friend's house we met 2 of the Dunleer men who had parted with us on Easter Monday and they told us how to get to the friend's house without attracting attention. At the friend's house we got a good feed and were told how to get by a bye road directly to Castlebellingham. We arrived at Castlebellingham Station about 10 p.m. We had to be careful here as the R.I.C. were guarding the station and railway line. We took to the fields at Castlebellingham and lost ourselves and several times found ourselves near the Station having travelled in circles through the fields. We got on a narrow road after we felt apparently lost in the fields and unfortunately this road did not take us in Dundalk direction but across country. After wasting some hours in fruitless wandering we arrived within sight of the Distillery Chimney in Dundalk. Our wandering in circles around Castlebellingham was fortunate in a way as had we not gone astray we could have arrived in Dundalk about 3 a.m. and have been in our homes when the police and military carried out a big round up of all the volunteers in Dundalk. When we arrived in town I parted with my comrade in Chapel Lane. I have never seen him since and I went to a house in Mill Street which I reached at 6 a.m. in the last stages of physical exhaustion. I immediately went to bed.

I was awakened from a sound sleep to be told that

soldiers and police were looking for me at my home at 3 a.m. that morning. I was also told of the arrests in various parts of the town and parades through the streets in handcuffs to the Courthouse and elsewhere. Having no desire to be forced through the town in such a manner I got out of bed and proceeded to Ann St. R.I.C. Barracks and enquired there if the police were looking for me. I was only there a few minutes when a Sergeant came in and on seeing me exclaimed "Hello! are you here? We have just been down in Mill Street looking for you". I was searched, all personal belongings taken from me and an inventory of them taken and then handed back to me. A man came to me with a paper in his hand and read out to me a list of charges including a charge of murder and high treason and many others. I signed my name to the Charge Sheet. I was then taken by four policemen to His Majesty's prison, Dundalk. My personal belongings were here again examined and taken from me. I was then taken to the basement of the prison and locked in a cell. About 3 p.m. the next day we were taken out of the cells, handcuffed in pairs, we were formed up in fours and marched to the Railway Station followed by a great crowd who cheered us. We were put on a train with a heavy guard of military for Dublin. When we arrived at Drogheda Station more prisoners were entrained and the train proceeded to Dublin. At Amiens St. Station in Dublin where we arrived a scene of great bustle and excitement took place, officers running about and shouting. We were again lined up between a strong military escort and marched through the streets of Dublin to Richmond Military Barracks. A roll was called and we were taken into the Barracks and put into a room, dark, cold and cheerless devoid of anything in the nature of furniture. We were handed blankets about an hour after we were put in the room. We were told later that we would get no food until 8 a.m. next morning. We were told that we were

not to show any lights and that the sentries had orders to shoot without question any of us showing ourselves at the windows of the room. After a most uncomfortable night on the hard floor we were allowed to wash and got a most unappetising breakfast of tea, tin-beef and hard biscuits. We were not supplied with drinking utensils but had to do as best we could from a bucket. On the 3rd day in Richmond we all had our fingerprints taken. We arrived in Richmond on Saturday night and on Friday following we were marched out on the Square. An officer called our names which we answered. We were handed extra rations for a journey and at 7 p.m. we were marched from Richmond Barracks to the North Wall. We were put on a boat in the cargo section. As we were down in the hold of the vessel we could not see where we were being taken and all sort of wild rumours got into circulation as to our destination. After about 5 hours at sea we got to Hollyhead. A corridor train was waiting at Hollyhead and we were put into the carriages, 8 to 10 in each. The corridors were occupied by a military guard. We started on our journey about 2 a.m. and eventually arrived at Wakefield about 10 a.m. In Wakefield we were marched to His Majesty's Prison; each man was escorted to the cells after the usual preliminary inventory being taken of our possessions and identity marks being recorded. Each was put in a separate cell. The cells in Wakefield were clean, well lighted and ventilated. The prison day in Wakefield started at 5.30 a.m. when all prisoners had to get up and get washed and dressed and cell put in order. Doors opened at 6 a.m. when cell had to be washed out; breakfast 7.30 (bread and coffee); exercise 11 a.m. to 12 noon; dinner 12.30 p.m. (meat, soup, potatoes and bread); evening meal 4.30 p.m. (tea, bread and a little butter); doors then locked for the night. For the first week in Wakefield we were not allowed to write, have

books, see visitors or see a clergyman. At the end of the second week a military officer was sent down from the War Office to inspect us and hear complaints. He was a pleasant man and promised to have our complaints considered. The next day we got permission to write a letter home each week, to receive newspapers and to hear Mass. Each day in Wakefield saw a gradual relaxation of prison discipline; visitors came in, tobacco, cigarettes, newspapers, cakes and eatables of all kinds whilst Nuns came in with beads, medals, prayer books, religious magazines, pens, pencils and writing paper. The generosity of all those good people who were mostly Irish was much appreciated.

At the end of the 4th week the first batch of prisoners were sent away for internment in North Wales. It came my turn to go. I was glad of the chance of leaving the prison for what I believed would be open air life in a Camp. In the prison I had been working at my trade as a painter and had more freedom than other prisoners. I was moving about all over the place and sometimes would be out of my cell until 8 p.m.

Before leaving the prison each man was furnished with an Internment Form. I left Wakefield on the 19th June for Frongoch Camp, North Wales. Our escort to Frongoch was a detachment of Cameron Highlanders all jolly fellows who were anxious to hear the Soldiers Song sung. Late that evening we arrived at the Camp and saw prisoners in the Camp watching our arrival from the windows as we came in. We were lined up in the compound and the military O/C. of the Camp came and gave us a brief outline of the working of the Camp telling us that we would be controlled by our own officers and that he would not hesitate to use severe measures if we did not keep within the bounds of discipline. Each of us then were subjected to a personal search and our belongings taken from us. When

all this was completed each man was given a number and told off to his particular dormitory. The Camp buildings were previously used as a brewery, the long grain lofts had been converted into sleeping apartments with the addition of some new huts used for the same purpose.

The day at Frongoch started with a parade of all prisoners in the compound at 6 a.m. for counting, then dismissed to get washed for breakfast at 7.30 a.m. which was served in a large dining hall capable of holding several hundred men. After breakfast fatigue parties were numbered off for work around the Camp whilst the remainder of the prisoners were free to amuse themselves until 11 a.m. when military officer commanding inspected all prisoners, dormitories, dining hall, workhouses, yards and passages to see that everything was kept clean and in order. Dinner was served at 12.30 p.m. Tea was served at 5 p.m. The food in the camp was on the whole fairly good.

Twice each day we were allowed into a recreation field enclosed by barbed wire and guarded by Sentries where we played various games - football, running, jumping, weight-throwing. After tea we had lectures, concerts, etc. At 8 p.m. all prisoners had to be in their dormitories for the night and were lined up for the last counting by an officer at 9 p.m.; lights out and silence from 9.45 p.m. Occasionally a "General" came from the War Office to inspect the Camp; on those occasions we made complaints about overcrowding in the dormitories and congestion generally.

The Camp was surrounded on all sides by 2 rows of barbed wire 9' high where sentries were posted at regular intervals both day and night to ensure against our escaping. The sentries were placed on raised platforms and the vicinity

of the wires was illuminated to give the Sentries clear vision at night.

When the "Advisory Committee" set up by the British Government to investigate our cases was sitting in London, batches of about 60 prisoners were sent before them each day for examination. When my turn came I enjoyed the visit to London. When I arrived with my batch in London we were taken from Paddington Station by motor bus to Wormwood Scrubbs prison. We remained in the "Scrubbs" from 6 p.m. on a Saturday evening and on Monday we were brought in in batches of six at a time before a Committee of five men. We were received by the "Committee" in a kind and considerate manner. We were given armchairs to sit on and told to make ourselves comfortable. Each of us was asked a few questions by one of the Committee which we might answer or not answer as we thought fit. After the questioning which lasted only a few minutes we were told we could leave the room. The Committee could deal with about 250 cases each day. As the food was bad in Wormwood Scrubbs we were glad to get back to Frongoch again.

Shortly after our interview with the advisory committee we were released in batches day after day until the camp was cleared of prisoners.

Signed

Daniel Hume

Date

15/1/50

Witness

Patrick J. McHugh

Date

15/1/50

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