

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21
No. W.S. 347

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 347.....

Witness

Mr. Patrick Callanan,
Craughwell,
Co. Galway.

Identity

Brigade Chief of Scouts 1915-1916;
" " " Police, 1919 - Truce.

Subject

- (a) National activities 1905-16;
- (b) Carnmore Cross (Co. Galway) Easter Week 1916;
- (c) Mobilisation of I.V's. Bushfield area (Co. Galway)
Easter Week 1916.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil

File No. S.1324.....

Form B.S.M. 2.

ORIGINALSTATEMENT BY PATRICK GALANANCraughwell, Co. Galway.

I joined the Clarinbridge Circle of the Irish Republican Brotherhood in April 1905. I was sworn in by Thomas Kilkelly who was Centre. Meetings were held regularly every three weeks; occasionally weekly meetings were held. The principal matters discussed at the meetings were, land division, methods to be adopted to compel landlords to sell holdings to the tenant farmers, which included cattle driving, breaking walls and the firing into the houses of landlords and their supporters. Also at the meetings the suitability of persons proposed for membership was thoroughly examined.

The strange thing about it was that immediately after joining the organisation, members were questioned by the police about agrarian incidents, although never questioned before. In fact, the police never questioned anyone except members of the I.R.B. The older members of the I.R.B. were in the organisation solely for the purpose of obtaining land and had no national outlook. There were only three exceptions, Michael Murphy, Killeely; Patrick Glasby, Killeeneen, and John Newell, Caherdine.

In 1906 I moved to Creggane, Craughwell, and was transferred to the Craughwell Circle of the I.R.B.,

of which Tom Kenny was Centre. Agrarian trouble was very acute in Craughwell parish at the time. There was an old dispute over the farm of Monatique owned by Mr. Martin McDonagh of Galway, and also over the farm of Mrs. Ryan of Craughwell. The I.R.B. took an active part in the driving of cattle, especially in the case of Mrs. Ryan, who was supported by the United Irish League, (U.I.L.). This dispute led to the fatal shooting of Constable McGoldrick in January 1909. Two I.R.B. men, Michael Dermody and Thomas Hynes, were arrested and charged with the murder of Constable McGoldrick. They were detained for nine months in Galway Jail and tried at the Assises in Limerick. The jury disagreed. They were brought to Dublin and tried again. They were acquitted on the capital charge, but kept in custody on other counts. They were released unconditionally about eight months later. They were defended by A.M. Sullivan, K.C. and H. McDermott, B.L. The principal witness for the prosecution was Barney Naughton, a Connemara man, who swore that he was on Templemartin bridge at the time of the shooting, which was about 8.30 a.m., and identified both of the accused. Both of the accused were, in fact, innocent.

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In 1912 following a shooting incident which took place in Furey's yard, Lecarrow, when shots were fired at U.I.L. delegates returning from a meeting in Loughrea. This was a national issue between the

U.I.L. and Sinn Féin. The President of the local branch of the U.I.L. was Martin Hallinan. Four others and I were arrested and charged with the shooting. We were brought to Galway Jail and later transferred to Mountjoy Prison, Dublin, where we were detained for five weeks waiting trial. We were tried in Green Street and acquitted. When I returned to my uncle with whom I had been living, he refused to allow me in. I then went back to my mother's home in Killeeneen.

Most of those I knew in the I.R.B. in Craughwell from 1905-1916, aided the R.I.C. in Craughwell during Easter Week, 1916.

Shortly after the Volunteers were founded in Dublin a meeting was held at Clarinbridge for the purpose of starting a Company of Volunteers in that area. Mr. Patrick Jordan, a veteran of the I.R.B. and Land League, presided. Mr. George Nicholls and Pat Lambert addressed the meeting, after which a large number of men joined the Volunteers. A few nights afterwards a meeting of the Company was held, about one hundred being present. Eamon Corbett was elected Captain.

We were trained by reservists of the British Army until the First World War started when they were called up. By that time we had learned enough to be able to carry on ourselves. A big parade of the Volunteers was held in Athenry on the 29th June, 1914. Following this parade an Executive Committee for the control of the Volunteers in Galway was formed. This Committee continued in office until the split.

At the split our Company, of which a large number were I.R.B. men, remained loyal to McNeill. The Company was very active and on several occasions supplied organisers to other districts. Some members of the Company assisted at the drilling and training of other Companies. Parades were held twice a week. Practically all our men were farmers' sons, who, having worked ten to twelve hours, turned up regularly for three hours' drill. We also had inter-Company manoeuvres at night and inter-Battalion manoeuvres at week-ends.

Late spring or early summer 1915, Liam Mellows came as Chief Organiser for Galway. Shortly after his arrival Galway was organised into a Brigade of four Battalions. The Battalions were, Galway, Athenry, Loughrea and Gort. Larry Lardiner was appointed Brigade O/C. I was Brigade Chief of Scouts, which appointment I held up to and during the Rising. I also maintained my connection with the Clarinbridge Company. Eamon Corbett was appointed O/C. Athenry Battalion.

During the summer of 1915, Mellows came to Clarinbridge and inspected the Company. I enrolled Joe Howley, Oranmore (who was later murdered by Black & Tans, near Broadstone Station, Dublin), in the I.R.B. A few nights after Mellows' visit, Joe Howley and I attended a lecture delivered by Mellows in Athenry Town Hall. on military tactics.

Howley was greatly impressed by Mellows. After the lecture, Mellows, Howley and I arranged to hold manoeuvres on the following Sunday week between Clarinbridge, Macee, Oranmore and Derryconnell Companies. An attempt was made by Mr. Thomas Kenny, Chairman of the County Galway Board of the G.A.A., to upset our plans, by arranging a list of fixtures to be played at Oranmore on the same day. When I asked him to cancel or postpone the fixtures he refused saying, "you are killing the best movement we ever had - the G.A.A.". However, the manoeuvres were a great success and the matches fell through. As a result I was suspended from the G.A.A. by Kenny.

Liam Mellows was arrested in July, 1915, and sentenced to three months' imprisonment. A contingent of Volunteers from Galway, some carrying rifles and others with pikes, marched in the O'Donovan Rossa funeral in Dublin under Commandant Larry Lardiner.

While Mellows was in jail, Fr. Feeney was appointed C.C., Clarinbridge. He created a new spirit in the Volunteers and took an active part in organising the Volunteers all over the country. He received great assistance from Fr. O'Meehan, C.C., Kinvara, Fr. Tom Burke, Diocesan Secretary, and Fr. Connolly, Professor, Diocesan College, Ballinasloe.

In November, 1915, a review of the Volunteers was held at Athenry at which O'Rehilly took the salute. After the review a meeting was held at which O'Rehilly, Fr. O'Loney (Carmelite, Loughrea), Fr. Connolly, The College, Ballinasloe, and Fr. Meehan were the principal

speakers. Others on the platform were, Fr. Tom Burke, Fr. Toal, Sligo, Fr. Clarke, Craughwell, Fr. Cawley, P.P., Shanaglish, Fr. Kelly, Galway, Fr. Moran, P.P., Claregalway and Fr. Feeney. When Mellows stood up to speak he received a great ovation, and the Volunteers fired volleys in the air with delight. Everything went very well after that. On St. Patrick's Day, 1916, about one thousand Volunteers marched in the procession in Galway City.

Dick Murphy who was County Centre of the I.R.B. for years before the Rising, told me that a few months before the Rising P.H. Pearse visited Athenry and had a conference with Larry Lardiner, Brigade O/C., and himself (Dick Murphy). In the course of the conversation Pearse told them that a rising had been decided upon but he did not mention a date for it. Pearse asked Lardiner if he could hold a line on the river Suck near Ballinasloe. Lardiner said he could. Murphy then said they could not hold a position on the Suck for any length of time owing to the poor equipment and armament they had, and that the only chance they had was to attack the local R.I.C. Barracks. Murphy also told me that Pearse seemed very disappointed, and that both Lardiner and he assured Pearse they would be in the fight whenever it took place, and do the best they could. It was after the Rising that Murphy told me this.

During Holy Week, orders were issued to the Company for a Church Parade on Easter Sunday morning, arms and rations to be carried. Also during Holy Week,

contradictory instructions were received in Galway and created considerable confusion among the leaders. I did not see any of these instructions.

Liam Mellows arrived at Killeeneen on Holy Saturday night. Also on Holy Saturday night a meeting was held at George Nichol's house, University Road, Galway. Those present were, George Nichols, Larry Lardiner, Eamon Corbett, Nicholas Kyne, Tom Ruane, Micheál Ó Droighneáin, John Hosty and myself. After discussing the position it was decided that John Hosty should go to Dublin immediately to see Pearse, McDermott, Clarke or any of the leaders he could get in touch with and find out the true position and send back the information. Hosty went to Dublin that night.

On Easter Sunday I went to Mass at Roveagh Church with the rest of the Company. Fr. Feeney celebrated the Mass. We had breakfast in the Church grounds and had almost finished it when the Countermanding Order arrived. The Company then disbanded. I returned to Walsh's house, Killeeneen, where Mellows was staying and remained there that evening.

At about 2 p.m. on Easter Monday, Fr. Feeney rushed into Walsh's with the news that Dublin was out since 12 noon. The local Company was mobilised. Mellows sent me and Joe Fleming to instruct several Companies to mobilise immediately in their own areas and to get in touch with him immediately they had done so.

I mobilised Maree, Oranmore, Claregalway and Castlegar Companies. I was unable to get in touch with anyone in Galway City. I called to Pádraig Thornton, Captain of the Moycullen Company. He promised to mobilise his Company, but failed to do so; he also failed to send word to Micheál Ó Droighneáin, Captain of the Spiddal Company, as he promised to do.

I returned to Clarinbridge with Joe Fleming at about 2 a.m. on Tuesday. I met Mellows and the Clarinbridge Company proceeding along the road in the direction of Oranmore. Mellows instructed me to go back and bring the Castlegar and Claregalway Companies to Oranmore and meet him there. When I arrived back at Oranmore with the two Companies, we found the British holding the bridge. We were informed that Mellows and the main body had gone to the Agricultural Station, Athenry. We returned to Carnmore Village at about 8 p.m. on Tuesday and having placed sentries, billeted for the night.

At about 4 a.m. on Wednesday about eight cars with police and special Constables were observed approaching from the direction of Galway. The Volunteers opened fire on them and they returned the fire. The cars advanced to the Carnmore cross roads; they halted a short distance from where a small number of Volunteers were. The police called on the Volunteers to surrender. The Volunteers again opened fire, killing one policeman and wounding a few others. The police got into the cars and retreated in the direction of Oranmore.

I was not present at this engagement; it was the sound of the shooting that awakened me. Immediately after this fight the two Companies proceeded across country to the Agricultural Station, Athenry.

Soon after our arrival there a Council of War was held at which the following were present :- Fr. Feeney, Liam Mellows, Éamon Corbett, Larry Lardiner, Matty Niland, Tom Ruane, Dick Murphy. At the meeting Tom Ruane suggested that we should break up into small columns and fight the police as we would meet them. The meeting was unanimously against doing so. It was decided to move to Moyode Castle. Mellows instructed me and Willie Newell of Castlegar Company to go to Moycullen and bring the Moycullen Company to Moyode as they were supposed to have forty shotguns which would be of great use. When leaving the Agricultural Station in Athenry, Mellows said to me he would never yield till the last hope was gone, as likely help would soon come, and Limerick and Clare would mobilise at the end of the week, which they did not.

Willie Newell and I went to Moycullen but we could not find Thornton - he had disappeared. On the way back to Moyode I met Fr. Moran, P.P., Claregalway, at Carnmore. He gave me two long Webley revolvers. I sent them on to Moyode. When I got as far as Bushfield about seven miles from Moyode, I discovered that a large number of false reports were being sent out to Mellows at Moyode. I set up an outpost there consisting of Thomas Furey, Roger Furey, Pat Flanagan and myself. We had two shotguns and a revolver between us, ten or twelve shotgun cartridges and six rounds of revolver ammunition. I sent word to Mellows giving him the correct details as to the number of

British troops in Galway City and informing him that there was no danger at all from this side, and asking him for further instructions. Mellows sent back word to remain where I was, and if any British troops should arrive, to communicate with him immediately and to barricade the roads so as to delay their advance.

We remained at Bushfield all Friday, and late that evening we got word that the Volunteers were likely to move that night. Not having received any information from Moyode, we decided at 3 a.m. on Saturday to go there. We had gone about one mile when we met some Volunteers who told us that they had been disbanded. I instructed the few men I had with me to go home also.

On Sunday I went "on the run", and in August, 1916, I escaped to America with Éamon Corbett.

SIGNED

Patrick Callaghan

DATE

24/1st 1950

WITNESS

Sean Brennan. Comdt.

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