

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 370

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 370

Witness

Mr. Fintan Murphy,
3, Greenpark,
Orwell Road, Rathgar, Dublin.

Identity

Member of Irish Volunteers, London, 1914;
Member of 'E' Company, 4th Battalion,
Dublin Brigade 1916.

Subject

- (a) Munition Factory, St. Enda's, Rathfarnham,
1916;
- (b) G.P.O. Easter Week, 1916.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil

File No. ...S:580

Form BSM 2

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STATEMENT OF MR. FINTAN MURPHY,
3, Greenpark, Orwell Road, Rathgar,
Dublin.

I was in Germany up to just before the outbreak of the war in 1914. I returned to London in July, 1914, and joined the Bermondsey Company of the Irish Volunteers. I am handing in to the Bureau my original Membership Card of the Volunteers, dated 28/7/1914. Captain Joseph Cassidy was in charge of our Company, and we drilled in the crypt of the Church in Bermondsey - just with dummy guns and so forth. I would say we had practically no arms.

In 1915, there were just weekly drills, meetings and lectures in the crypt of the Catholic Church.

On the 1st January, 1916, I came to Dublin and took up residence at St. Enda's. I transferred to E. Company, 4th Battalion (Rathfarnham), Dublin Brigade, of which Company I remained a member until the Rising. Having matriculated about 1912, I entered the University in Dublin. While attending the University, I was resident at St. Enda's. Amongst the residents, there were Conor McGinley, Eamon Bulfin, Desmond Ryan, John J. Kilgannon, Joe Sweeney, Bryan Joyce, Frank Burke and Eunan McGinley.

In February, or March, 1916, I was sworn in to

the I.R.B. by P.H. Pearse. I joined the Mitchell Circle. I did not attend any of the meetings of that Circle prior to Easter, 1916.

As a Volunteer, I drilled at Wilbrook, Rathfarnham - the old mill. I am sure the book strength might have been 150, but I would say there would be, on an average, 60-70 on parade. We were not all armed, but my impression was that there was a considerable number of mixed arms, including Howth rifles; and I would say that we, in St. Enda's, all had good Lee Enfields. I had a Lee Enfield myself.

I was quite aware that big events were moving from practically the beginning - that there was something "on the mat", but I could not have told you what it was precisely. Con Colbert must have been at St. Enda's quite frequently, as he was drill instructor. He used to give the lads drilling and suchlike.

I remember being on a Battalion exercise in the Tallaght area. I don't recollect whether it was before or after March 17th 1916. There were other Battalion exercises, but the details of them now I do not recall. I do not recall taking part in any exercises that had to do with the city at all. They were all country exercises. Padraig Pearse, I think, was the titular head of ^{the company} ~~it~~, Clarke was 1st Lieutenant, and Michael Boland was actually Company Captain in 1916. Bulfin was Lieutenant. JM

I did not know anything about the plans for this Company in the Rising.

The whole crew of St. Enda's - the students in the University - were engaged in making buckshot, ammunition, bombs, etc. There was a great quantity made there. We were continuously at it for several weeks before the Rising took place.

It appeared as an Order in the "Irish Volunteer" that there would be manoeuvres on Easter Sunday; and as a Volunteer I was aware of it. I did not envisage the Rising at all as it happened. I did not ponder the matter. I don't know whether, or not, I knew definitely there was going to be a Rising on Easter Sunday.

During Holy Week, we were still working on the stuff. Liam Mellows is the only one that I can recall in definite form. We knew he had escaped from the other side; and he was with us, dressed as a priest, from - I can't say what date; but he was with us until the Wednesday of ^{Holy} ~~Easter~~ Week, when he departed for Galway. I knew he was going to Galway. I did not see Connolly or MacNeill.

On Wednesday and Thursday of Holy Week, I was not sent out on any messages. On Friday, I got a message. We were working on the munition making until about three or three-thirty on Good Friday morning, and we had just packed up to go to bed when P.H. Pearse and Willie Pearse arrived in, ^{presumably} ~~apparently~~ from the city, and had a

conversation with - probably - Bulfin, as the senior. Eventually, Conor McGinley, to whom he gave certain instructions, did tell me to get my hat and coat on; and Conor McGinley and myself took our bicycles and set off for the city. This was in the very early hours of Good Friday morning. ^{We were} ~~The general~~ instruction ^{JM} was to deliver these messages to Tom Clarke, Seán MacDermott, The O'Rahilly, Tom MacDonagh and Eamon Ceannt. I did not see the messages. They were all written.

We went to Mountjoy Street first - the Munster Hotel - where we were sent on to an address in North Circular Road, and where we delivered the message to Seán MacDermott. We then proceeded to Richmond Avenue, to Tom Clarke's house. ~~From there,~~ ^{JM} proceeded to Herbert Park, where we saw The O'Rahilly, and ~~delivered~~ our message. We then went to Dolphin's Barn, and thence to Cullenswood Avenue for Tom MacDonagh. We did not see Tom MacDonagh. We spoke to Mrs. MacDonagh, who would not, or could not give us any information as to where we could find Tom MacDonagh. ^{JM} ~~We went to Herbert Park to the O'Rahilly to see if he could give us any information as to where we might find MacDonagh. He could not tell us and~~ ^{JM} In order to try and locate Tom MacDonagh, we decided to go into the city, to Volunteer Headquarters in Dawson Street. We arrived there before ten o'clock in the morning. We waited around Dawson Street, until Bulmer Hobson arrived at about ten o'clock. I remember Sergeant Hoey was on duty that morning. Conor and I were standing at the corner of Duke Street, and we saw Bulmer Hobson coming on his bike from the Stephen's

Green end of Dawson Street. Hobson opened up the Volunteer Headquarters premises; and, after a short time, we went across the street and in to the Headquarters. We asked Hobson could he tell us where we might find Commandant MacDonagh; and he informed us, "No", but asked us what message we had for him. We told him that it was a personal message, which we could only deliver to the Commandant himself. He endeavoured to get the message from us, but we refused; and he then told us that he could not be of any assistance to us. We asked him was the Commandant expected there during the morning; and he said he did not know. We asked would it be of any use for us to wait; and he said we could do what we liked. We remained there until some time after mid-day. When we were about to leave, Jack MacDonagh arrived. We told him we had a message for Commandant MacDonagh; and he promised to deliver it; and we gave the message to him. We returned to St. Enda's about four o'clock in the afternoon.

While we were waiting at Volunteer Headquarters, a number of Cumann na mBan girls came in. They were making up Red Cross bandages and first-aid kits. I remember listening to some of conversation amongst them - what were they doing this for? What use were they going to be? - and some of the others saying: "Oh, you will see in time". We were wise, of course, then, and we sort of smiled to ourselves at this conversation.

Nothing special happened in St. Enda's on Friday

night.

On Holy Saturday, I was in town nearly all the day. I think we bought the "War News", which had a reproduction of the British Government Order for the arrest of prominent leaders of the Volunteers, which was a revelation to us. We visited Lalor's in Fownes Street, and bought bandoliers and military equipment. Brian Joyce and John Kilgallon^{ll} were with me. I think we wound up "our last day on earth" by visiting the Colliseum in Henry Street, which had just been opened. We returned to St. Enda's late on Saturday night.

On Easter Sunday morning at about eight o'clock, Bulfin produced the "Sunday Independent", which contained the countermanding order by MacNeill. Bulfin was at seven o'clock Mass. I went to ten o'clock Mass at Rathfarnham, and after Mass Eamon Bulfin went over to Eoin MacNeill and had a spirited conversation with him. For the rest of Sunday - on Pearse's orders - we simply stood by at St. Enda's. Pearse and his brother saw us at about four o'clock on Sunday afternoon, I think. They came back to see their mother. Nothing of importance happened.

On Easter Monday, having received Company mobilisation order late in forenoon, we assembled at Rathfarnham Chapel about noon, under the interested eyes of the R.I.C. We marched to Terenure, I think, and got on a tram for the city. The tram was held up at College Green. Bulfin, who was in full Staff Officer's uniform, went on to the driver's platform with his revolver, but the driver refused to go any further. We dismounted, and marched to Liberty Hall,

via Butt Bridge. This was about one o'clock. Having been admitted to Liberty Hall, we proceeded to bore walls through. Instructions from the Post Office were received immediately there, and we marched via Abbey Street, O'Connell Street, to Prince's Street, where we entered the Post Office. We stood to for a bayonet charge from the Lancers before we got in to the Post Office.

When we entered Prince's Street, we were told to fix bayonets and turn about, at the ready - at the top of Prince's Street - in expectation of a cavalry charge coming down the street. This was warded off before they reached us. Jack Kealy was killed there. He let his rifle fall, and got shot on the thigh. Prior to our Company being admitted through the gate of the Post Office, we were handing in bombs, through an open window, to Volunteers in charge of Liam Clarke within. One of the bombs exploded, and seriously wounded Lieutenant Clarke about the face and head. Eventually, the gate into the yard of the Post Office was opened, and our Company was admitted.

JM For some portion of the ^{afternoon} day on Monday, I think I *JM* was engaged in moving stores from one part of the building to another, and on sentry duty outside the Prince's Street gate. Some time later, I was detailed for duty on the roof, at the Henry Street side. I have a distinct recollection of seeing a flag on the Prince's Street side. I believe I saw Eamon Bulfin

and Willie Pearse together at the flag-post in Prince's Street. It was from the roof I was sent to do duty as sentry on Prince's Street gate, and when I was relieved, I returned to my post on the roof with the rest of the Company.

I remained on the roof throughout Monday night, Tuesday, Tuesday night, Wednesday. We slept up on the tiles. My first lie-down was on Thursday afternoon, in the main sorting room, which had been converted into a hospital ~~room~~. ^{for} I remember lying on one of the counters, with full kit on me. While we were on the roof, we were supplied with food from a canteen there. I can't remember ever going in and sitting down to a meal. It was handed out to us, I think. The food was very scarce. The first solid food I remember getting was in Moore Street.

Monday night on the roof was, I think, relatively quiet. There was a certain amount of coming and going across O'Connell Street, which led to considerable firing. ^{for} ~~of~~ ^{the} course, there was a lot of looting on Monday afternoon. We could see it across the street.

I think there was a certain amount of sniping on the enemy on Tuesday night. There was alleged to be a British post down at Amiens Street Station; and I think I recall an order to us to withhold fire, so as not to be drawing fire on us. Nothing important

happened on Tuesday night.

On Wednesday morning, I think shells began to fly a bit. We heard them. That was when Father O'Flanagan came up on the roof to us in the early hours of Wednesday morning.

We were relieved from the roof on Thursday morning. It was then I went down to the main sorting room to rest. A bombardment of some fashion was going on then. It appeared to be on us. I was called to assist on barricade work. ^{I assisted in breaking} ~~We~~ broke into the mailbag storeroom, and got mailbags, which we filled with coal. We then barricaded the main office windows. After that, I was on duty in the main hall, at the front windows - just ordinary duty. I remember seeing Connolly there on his stretcher. I cannot recall Thursday night at all. I think the Metropole was on fire then. I recollect no fires in the G.P.O. that time. Thursday night - I cannot recall what happened.

On Friday morning, the bombardment started. I cannot recall the details of Friday morning itself. I should think it must have been about seven o'clock in the evening when we got an order for general assembly in the yard. It was a big space. It may have been the main sorting office. I was not up on the building at all after the fires started. I was aware, of course, of the fact that there were fires. We were all assembled and instructed. I think P.H. addressed us. He told us that the building had

become untenable, owing to the fires, and it was proposed that we should evacuate in good order, and make our way to Henry Street.

We evacuated in small groups, and dashed across Henry Street into Henry Place, which was right across from the Henry Street exit gate of the Post Office. At Henry Place, we were ^{confused} infiltrated by ^{JM} machine guns, ^{fire} apparently from the Rotunda. ^{direction} We took cover and, in small numbers, turned the corner to reach the Moore^e Street houses; and, as each party dashed across the opening of Moore Lane, machine gun fire came down the lane. We all got across in safety. This would have been about eight o'clock on Friday night. It was still daylight, but very soon after, I remember, it was dark. Our party then entered the first house in Moore Street. We bored through the walls, from house to house, throughout the night; and I recall retiring and resting in some old shed there.

On Saturday morning, I made my way through all the houses to the most advanced house in Moore Street. It was a good stretch up the street. I don't know what kind of rumours we heard then, but they were generally to the effect that we were finished. There was talk of surrender. At about three o'clock in the afternoon, we were all commanded to parade out in Moore Street. Large numbers protested against this order, but eventually we were all assembled. I believe it was Willie Pearse who conveyed to us the message from P.H. Pearse that we were to surrender.

After standing to ^{these} ~~arms~~ ^{for} for a considerable time, we marched through Henry Street into Upper O'Connell Street, on the Gresham Hotel side, where we were lined up at the pavement, with our arms. The British were at the top of the street, by the Parnell monument. We were given orders to advance to the line of the tram-track, to lay down our arms, and to retire back to the pavement again. The British then rushed down on us, and searched us individually for arms. After a considerable time, we were marched, under escort, up to the green front of the Rotunda Hospital, where we were all commanded to get on to the grass. We were placed under armed guard, and remained there - men and women - higgledy-piggledy, all night.

Between eight and nine o'clock on Sunday morning, we were assembled again in marching order. We marched, under escort, via the Quays to Richmond Barracks. There we were paraded, under escort, in the square, and taken off, in four's, around the corner of the Barracks. After each four departed, there was a burst of machine gun fire. This process took many hours. We were all cross-questioned by all the G-men - each four of us - and were taken in to Barrack rooms. I cannot remember who were the three companions with me. There were military officers questioning us. I think they relieved us of all property - anything we had in our pockets. They took all our names and addresses, for some unknown reason, on the Saturday night in O'Connell

Street, which took a long time.

I cannot recall the type of questions put to me in Richmond Barracks. After questioning and removal of any loose property, we were escorted in to Barrack rooms. I think they gave us something to eat. I remember buckets of water anyway. Most of us wanted to sleep; and during the time we remained in these rooms, G-men kept coming in and out, looking at individuals, questioning them, and sometimes taking them out. I remember seeing Hoey and Johnny Barton there.

Late on Sunday evening, a large number of us were assembled at the Barrack square again. We were marched out - ^{FM} probably under escort - and ^{FM} arrived at the North Wall, where we were put on ^(a) cattle boat - an uncleaned cattle boat. There were many speculations as to our destination. Some said we were being shipped to France, to be used as a labour corps. However, we were mostly so tired that we slept.

I slept during the journey until we reached Holyhead, where we were entrained. Eventually, at eight o'clock on Monday morning, we reached Stafford town, where we were brought to the military prison. Whilst we were being marched through the town, we could see newspaper posters, announcing collapse of Irish rebellion and surrender; and the passers-by were very hostile, some attempting to attack the prisoners, but were warded off by the British escort.

In Stafford prison there were three buildings - the Crescent, the Hospital Block and, I think, "B" Block. Our crowd was put into the Crescent, which was empty, and had apparently been cleared for us. I cannot remember how many of us were in Stafford. At first, we had three weeks' solitary confinement. We got Army rations - Army detention barracks rations, on Army scale. I was starving, to the extent that I used collect the crumbs out of ^{off my table} ~~the~~ ^{me} hunk of bread. We were completely deprived of anything in the nature of reading matter, or anything whatever to occupy our time. That was the worst part of it.

After three weeks' solitary confinement, we got segregated exercise - marching around the ring in silence, or alleged silence, for, I think, about half an hour in the morning and half an hour in the afternoon, which was, by degrees, extended to an hour. I could not say when visitors were first allowed. I don't think that started until we had a certain amount of freedom ^{inside the barracks} ~~to~~ ^{FM} visitors, or letters, or anything. ^{FM}

I was in Stafford until August, I think, when I was in the last batch to be transferred to Frongoch. We did not go to the Sankey Commission until September, when we were brought up in batches from Frongoch to London - ~~I think~~ ^{FM} to Wandsworth. ^{FM}

Signed

Franklin Murphy

Witness -

D. J. Feeley

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
 BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21
 NO. W.S. 370

9 2. 1950

General Post Office. 1

BURTON ROAD, BIRMINGHAM (1107)
BURO TELEPHONE NO. 111701
NO. W.S. 370

x a funny slip about Fr. O'Flanagan in the
Press accounts! Didn't see your collection - as I gather
from Bob's letter enclosed you made one

This is quite accurate in its general outline and also in the details and in the times. How you managed to get in so much in the twenty minutes is a miracle. I read both the Independent and Irish Press reports, and the M. S. only confirms my feeling of how good and fair a picture it is. Unfortunately I was out of town that night and could not listen in myself, but it will interest you to hear that in the South Norwood district the reception was quite good with the exception of the part from the Rotunda incident when there was interference and fading. I think your father's ill-luck in listening to parts of it was due to that damned German station that too often comes in. I missed by five minutes the Boland Mill broadcast but the ~~James~~ Four Courts that followed was quite good; Jacobs later in the week was also fair. Athlone is pretty constant with me. The set I use is an American 5 valve and indoor aerial; "Belmont."

Now your own broadcast in detail. You would by the way, have got more material out of the Easter Week chapters of the Invisible Army where I followed our own fortunes more in detail than in Remembering Sion.

What was the flag first hoisted: was it the middle flag - green with I. R. in centre? Where were "The Plough and the Stars" we hear of so often? Was this the flag Willie and Yam hoisted? On Henry St. corner as soon as we reached it on the Monday a young Glasgow Volunteer came along and erected a pole; I am not sure whether he then ran up a Tricolour but think so.
(Do you recall the group on the Henry st. house later reading out

Easter Week 2.

the Lord Lieutenant's proclamation about " ill-disposed persons " ?)

I don't remember Willie hoisting a flag but neither do I recall Yam doing so but he did for he told me so afterwards in Stafford when I showed him a copy of Chesterton-Belloc's paper, The New Witness, with an account of the Rising as seen by a John some One who had worked as a voluntary ambulance man during the week. This John had seen the hoisting of the Prince's St. tricolour by a Volunteer officer, in uniform ; Yam blushed and said the description was much too flattering.

The delay in opening the gate was stated to be due to the key being mislaid. This was true because as you note the gate was opened, ^{afterwards} You will recall our vigil there and our admitting the Metropole men later as they evacuated their position and how each was covered with a revolver and questioned. This scene you have given later in your broadcast so perhaps the detail mentioned may bring back more. You will recall too the rough barricade covering the entrance gate ; the blowing open of locks of different rooms in the first dash in, and all the damage that damned window made on necks and hands in the scramble through. All the Monday scene is vivid in your account. The wait. The charge. Poor Jack Kealy.* Liam [✓]Clake. (Your stricture on the bombs is only too true ; if poor Liam survived that explosion, it has since occurred to me, they can't have been what we fondly thought in those days they were !) The bomb, unloaded I heard at the time were Liberty hall ones with metal strikers. Liam had dashed round cheering when we first ~~we~~ entered. Next I saw him after the accident, eyes glazed. He had to go off - after an order from Pearse to hospital.

* Re Jack thought he was shot in the stomach

Easter Week. 3.

On the roof : you will find some more details in the Invisible Army. We fed on tea and rice and Yam told us to screen our fags in the dark. We saw the British officers arrested. A visit from O'Rehilly. Amiens St. tower. Crowds. Rumours. Ambulances. Fire engines ? John K. going below to congratulate Pete on his election. (That fur coat that saved John later with his coal-black face : he gave lip to that young pup who did his best to get Conor and Dermot Lynch done in with his evidence. The sharp-eyed little whoreson !) Light showers, yes. And the roar of rifle volleys along the quays as we dropped off. The South Dublin Union perhaps ? All the other detail here is first-rate : the wireless on the D.B.C. for instance with its flashes in the dark. Apparently the attempt to broadcast succeeded since we afterwards got a U.S. paper of Tuesday's date with a huge Streamer : Ireland declares Republic on front page.

Tuesday : All accurate. There is a difficulty in getting the times right but you seem to have done this. Was it on Tuesday that our red-headed " Caesar " of the Rathfarnham company roused us in the small hours with news of a coming attack and a crowd of Liberty hall sympathisers invaded the roof ? I remember seeing Buckley and the Maynooth men on a short trip below : tired and dusty. Among the rumours was a persistent one that the Lower Castle Yard was taken and Willie seemed to credit this. Do you recall any mention of MacBride on a short visit on Monday or Tuesday ? I have an obstinate ^{recollection} picture of seeing him passing through the large lower room smiling and hailing people ; on the Monday or Tuesday.

Wednesday : The shelling. Very good. I remember a group of
②* Perhaps James Kelly - Colin's old pal, 3 Candles - would tell you more re this ; Wafer killed.

* One rumour. The German fleet was in the Bay / Pearce looked sad & embarrassed when asked to confirm this. Some said these rumours were spread to mislead Govt. but every account - in the positions shown outside - shows these rumours arose everywhere

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us listening to Liberty Hall going west and the machine guns and pounders making the g air quiver, and Yam saying : " Any one who has stood this can never be accused of cowardice. " Also that curious feeling to which you later refer that some of us were due for a bullet. Jack White : justice is done. Make it clear tho' that you don't mean Capt. White if ever you publish this as the Capt. is also known as " Jack White. " Desmond Fitzgerald : what noble restraint you showed ! I think you had a little story about the weakness of that gentleman for confusing tea and coffee in the same pot. He was good to me tho', I must say : cigars and oranges. All the description here is vivid and to the point.

Thursday : Same applies. Again see the Invisible Army re fire etc as I followed notes and memory very closely.

Friday : Same remark.

SURRENDER : All good. Do you remember Pearse saying we were going to break through to Four Courts ? Plunkett rallying the men past that barricade ? Pearse had evidently heard Yam had been slightly hit because he mentioned this as we met in Moore St. One thing you have omitted - again the source already quoted will refresh your memory : our going through the Moore St. rooms and warning and searching the men re possible loot; and that we found not one case of this - indignation or chaff at the suggestion - except one ~~poor~~ poor frightened chap, middle-aged, who had taken a tawdry comb for his wife ! ~~Exams~~ Exhaustion and weariness well conveyed : recall conversation with you as we sat on a floor. Willie told me that Connolly had been asked out to discuss surrender ; nothing else for it except slaughter ; to say nothing. Tears in Connolly's eyes in H. Q. room.

X O Do you recall contradictory instructions as to time of fire etc? Jack said some were else, three; & so on

Easter Week. 5.

by British officers

Only one other point: ^① Re abuse. This cannot be overdone but it is perhaps as well to recall our bitter and overwrought feelings. For instance General Lowe - one of the best of the lot, courteous to Pearse and Miss Farrell, an opponent of the executions etc. - was rather terse with his "You will be watered and fed." This seemed worse at the time than it was in the circumstances but for years the sub-conscious resentment of the time I heard it simmered inside me. ^② I only say this for your guidance, in case you ever publish anything of this broadcast. Any experience like that leaves over stored bitterness that cannot always be justified and may distort or give an outsider the idea that the account is biased.

Well that's all, and many thanks for sending the M. S. and regrets I did not hear it. I do remember waking up in the Rotunda but had forgotten you were my blanket.

Desmond Ryan

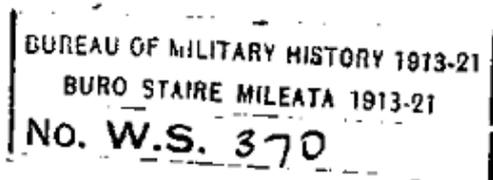
18/5/36

- ① After all, one warned the men to throw away compromising papers, another recognised his own brother in ranks; Tommas in Richmond refused to identify; some of men looked the other way; even Johnny Boston wanted to let Mick Knightly out, etc
- ② On the other hand, the Rotunda scene is remarkable for its understatement.

Please
return to me
E.H.M.

Franklin Murphy
9 Palmerston Road

Rathfriland



G.P.O. EASTER WEEK 1916

MONDAY

Twenty years ago tonight and almost within a week of this date, I stood, with a rifle in my hand, on the roof of this G.P.O.

It had been seized and occupied about midday on that Easter Monday by Pearse, Connolly, Sean MacDermott, Tom Clarke, Joe Plunkett, and the garrison with them, and cleared of its protesting occupants; and the proclamation of the Irish Republic had been read by Connolly from the street and later posted up. The tricolour had been triumphantly hoisted on the roof.

My company, E. Company of the 4th Battalion, had been seriously delayed in its mobilization and we did not get to the Post Office until after one o'clock. We were led by Eamonn Bulfin, a staff lieutenant on Pearse's personal staff. By the way, it was Bulfin's father who wrote "Rambles in Eireann" and had been, long ago, in Buenos Aires and was editor of the "Southern Cross".

When we got to Princes Street, our efforts to gain admission to the G.P.O. did not meet with any response in spite of our repeated calls and knocking. However, whilst we were trying to make ourselves known, a diversion came in the form of a messenger to tell our C.O. that a troop of Lancers was advancing at a gallop from Upper O'Connell Street. We were ordered to fix bayonets and take up our positions at the top of the street. This was an unexpected baptism of fire for us, but we took up our positions and awaited the charge. We soon heard a burst of firing around the corner but no troops appeared. A further crack of the rifles and then quietness again. The Lancers had been driven off by snipers from within and, luckily for us we were reformed to enter the building.

For some reason which I have never learned, the gates were not opened and we had to break some windows to get in. It was here that our first casualty occurred. Jack Keely of Rathfarnham and I were at one window and he jumped to the sill. As he did so, he let his rifle drop and when the stock hit the ground the rifle went off, the bullet ripped up through his thigh, and poor Jack fell mortally wounded.

When we had climbed through, we reported and soon Willie Pearse came down to welcome our arrival telling us how anxious Pearse had been at our continued absence. We were soon detailed for serious work on hands, and our first job was to unload a cartfull of hand grenades which had just arrived in Princes Street. After all our trouble in forcing our way in to the Post Office some of us had now to go out again into the street -- this time, however, we used the gate to do so. These grenades were home made, just tins packed with shrapnel and a charge and they were probably more dangerous to us than to the enemy. Anyway, they soon wrought havoc with one of our own. We had been handing them in through a window for some time when, just as I arrived with an armful, I saw Lieutenant Liam Clarke of my own company standing inside clearing some of the grenades from the sill. As he was lifting them, as bad luck would have it, one slipped from his hand and, to my consternation, exploded. I expected the whole lot would go off but fortunately they didn't, but Liam Clarke got the full contents in his face and he was soon all covered with blood and had to be removed to the field hospital inside. Our company was certainly being unlucky -- with two casualties within an hour.

We next got orders to garrison the roof, and when we

Confirm
~~this point~~
with
Bulfin.

arrived there I was just in time to see Willie Pearse with Lieut. Bulfin hoist the second tricolour on the Prince's Street side. We were to make the roof our home for some time to come -- in fact, we were not relieved until Wednesday afternoon, taking our meals in a canteen which was at roof level. As the roof was surrounded by a parapet, it made an admirable barricade for us. The weather was fine and dry that week ^{except for light showers now and again} and sleeping on the roof was no great hardship.

We spent the afternoon on the look-out and watching the crowds which had not yet dispersed in the street below and squads of our men crossing over O'Connell Street to take up positions in the buildings on the opposite side.

Inside the building, there was feverish activity fortifying it and getting in stores as well as establishing communications with the other garrisons in the city. Headquarters Staff was established in the central hall on the ground floor, and the sorting room was made into a hospital. ~~We learned that Connolly had been wounded in the leg rather seriously, but had refused to allow himself to be removed.~~

In the telegraph room, efforts were being made to despatch and tap messages; and across the road in the Marconi Wireless School over the D.B.C. attempts were made to broadcast the news of the insurrection to the world.

The night came on without much incident, and about three on Tuesday morning my turn came for a sleep, and I slept soundly if not exactly comfortably reclining on the slates till dawn.

TUESDAY:

Tuesday was uneventful enough, although the British seemed to have managed to get as close as O'Connell Bridge with what we afterwards learned was a home-made armoured-car and from time to time sprayed the street with machine-gun fire at the slightest sign of movement. Communications with the parties occupying the Imperial Hotel, ^{now Cleary's} D.B.C., and other buildings opposite became somewhat hazardous; and it was only by short rushes that our men could get over. From our vantage

point on the roof we had an excellent view of all that took place in the street below. By now, of course, the crowds had cleared off and except for the movements of our men it was deserted.

Stories of the progress of events in other centres came up to us from below of the most varied and sometimes fantastic nature -- some said the Germans had landed here, there and everywhere, -- a German Submarine was coming up the Liffey, -- ^{the Volunteers} our men were marching in from the country, -- the whole of the country was up in arms and so on.

On this afternoon Donnall Ua Buachalla, the present Seanascal, and his gallant little band from Maynooth had succeeded in making their way up from the country and had joined the garrison.

Outposts were being detailed to various outlying places in the North City and reliefs despatched to the posts at Hopkins and Kelly's Fort at O'Connell Bridge.

Sniping was continually proceeding through the day but the British being too far distant did not succeed in returning it to any effect.

Here, I must not forget to pay a tribute to the gallantry and goodness to us of that brave band of women, some only in their teens, who tended and cared for us during the week, some of them risking their lives in crossing the street to our outposts there and all ready and willing to undertake dangerous missions to other commands and elsewhere

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WEDNESDAY
MORNING

I remember awaking on Wednesday morning to a loud crash at no great distance away. Soon we realised that an attempt was being made from the Liffey and D'Olier street to shell us although at that stage with very little result. About eight o'clock the late Father ~~of~~ ^{formerly} Flanagan, of Marlboro' street came bravely clambering over the roof. He wore his stole and told us he was going to give us General Absolution in view of what appeared to be the beginning of ~~an~~ ^{a serious} attack and then proceeded to do so. Shortly after a very different figure scrambled across and with a very different mission. He was a squat, thickset figure, with the ruddy face of a sailor, with a red muffler around his neck and a large black sombrero-like hat. His side pockets were bulging with something or other, and he had a large knife thrust in his belt. There was no nervousness or agitation about this one -- in fact he had somewhat of an air of jubilation and was clearly enjoying himself. He was none other than Jack White of the Citizen Army. Jack was a rough diamond but certainly a cheery companion in a tight corner. He had seen a bit of the world -- in fact, according to himself, he had seen all the world from China to Peru and regaled us with gory yarns of some of his amazing adventures, in "furrin parts". He could relate these stories with a wealth of descriptive power which was nothing short of miraculous but I haven't time to tell you any of them much as I'd like to. Jack's visit to us, however, was for the purpose of telling us how to use the home-made grenades, so pulling one from his jacket pocket he began to tell us in the most lurid language imaginable not only how he suggested we should use them but also how they came to be made. My companion beside me did not relish the fluency of his speech and mildly asked him to restrain it. This, I think, pained Jack because he left us soon after and I did not see him for some days -- in fact not until just before the surrender in Moore street when, I gathered, he was packing up to move on to another revolution, ours having apparently failed to come up to his expectations.

Towards the middle of the day we were relieved from roof duty and although the weather had kept remarkably fine we were
pleased to get

- 2 - 6

down for a change. The bombardment was still proceeding spasmodically without, however, much result.

Our new duties were to re-inforce the men at the barricades at the windows in the central hall and here for the first time during the week I came in close contact with our leaders. Connolly was reclining on a stretcher bed on account of the wound in his leg which was certainly worrying him a lot by now in spite of attention. Around him would gather from time to time Pearse, MacDermott, Tom Clarke, Joe Plunkett and their attendant staff officers, consulting and reviewing the position and issuing orders.

Our worst enemy ^{fire} was now creeping up on us. The old Metropole was blazing furiously just across the narrow width of Princes street, as well as the Freemans Journal office and that whole block. The buildings on the other side of the street were also beginning to take fire so that all to the south and east of us was blazing. That night I was put on sentry duty at the Princes street gate and apparently forgotten for I spent most of the night there watching the blaze through the gate. Some of our men went out across to the stables at the back of the Freemans Journal office and released the horses. The frightened animals stampeded up the street and gave the impression of a cavalry charge.

Towards morning I was relieved and turned into the canteen where there was a crowd off duty and I spent some time with them regaling ourselves with hot soup. Considering our difficult position the commissariat was excellent ^{under the direction of} Desmond Fitzgerald ~~was in charge of~~ this department.

Thursday

Thursday morning dawned another fine and bright day. ~~Bursting shells~~ ^{all round} could be heard, We were called on to help ^{strengthen} reinforce the barricades in the front windows. ^{a crowd of us} ~~I and some others~~ went searching for material. It was decided to use the coal out of the cellars but we had no means of hauling it up so we scouted around until we came to

the mail bag room which was locked. We burst it open and there to our satisfaction we found neatly piled up hundreds of new, clean mail bags. These we brought down to the cellars and filling each with coal we carried them up to the windows and stacked them like sand bags. They seemed excellent for their purpose as the hard coal formed a fine bullet-resisting material, but when the fires crept down to them they added to our difficulties to put them out.

This work had been pretty exhausting and we were given leave to lay off for a while. I searched around for a comparatively quiet corner and eventually came on the sorting room which had been turned into our hospital. I climbed on to one of the counters and soon fell fast asleep. Some hours later I was awakened by a terrific explosion but I did not immediately get up. Presently, however, a nurse told me that shells were beginning to drop on the roof and it was being evacuated by the men who had relieved us yesterday.

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The British had evidently found the range and were busy landing incendiary shells on us. It was one of these shells which finally set the roof alight causing the whole building to take fire and eventually driving us out.

FRIDAY

By Friday morning we were well ablaze and strenuous efforts were made to extinguish it in the upper storeys but to no avail and bit by bit we were driven down till the roof finally collapsed.

During the late afternoon The O'Rahilly set out with a squad to reconnoitre and clear a way for our retreat to a new position, if necessary. He went to the head of Moore Street and as is well known planned to charge up the street to the British barricade. He had not gone far when he was struck by a fusillade of bullets and fell dead at the head of his men.

THE EVACUATION AND SURRENDER.

By Friday afternoon ~~we~~^{now} all realised that our occupation of the building could not last much longer and, equipped with the depressed and hopeless feeling which had taken possession of many of us, there was a bustling activity to collect what stores we could take with us when the evacuation was ordered. By this time, of course, the roof and upper stories had been blazing for a long time and we were now only occupying the ground floor and the Henry and Princess Street wings.

Towards the evening the order was given for the fall in with full kit in the central courtyard, and presently ~~Mr.~~ Pearce and ~~the~~ Headquarters Staff with their staff officers took up a position in front of our assembled ranks, and, having addressed words of encouragement and praise for our defence of the position, told us that the staff had decided that the building was untenable and that we must seek positions elsewhere. Our orders were to leave by the Henry Street gate and proceed in column across to Moore Lane opposite, where we were to receive further orders. An advance party had gone ahead to prepare the way for the main body. It must have been about eight o'clock on that clear spring evening when the garrison began what was to be its second last major movement before the end. It was also to prove practically my last glimpse of ~~Mr.~~ Pearce whom I had known for so many years, first as my schoolmaster and then as my military commander. He looked weary, I remember, but not defeated -- still the same quiet voice which had inspired us on so many occasions. ~~But I also was weary and in no mood to make any acute observations, nor to store up detailed memories of what was,~~ ^{such} ~~as~~ ~~the~~ ~~occasion.~~

~~---~~

We filed out and doubled across Henry Street, but when we arrived in the lane we were met by the clatter of a machine gun seemingly straight ahead of us. An officer yelled an order for us to seek cover and we drew in to the walls on either side awaiting further orders. At first it was not apparent where the enemy post was located, but presently we realised that it was mounted on a building in Parnell Street, a considerable distance away but still covering perfectly all advance in the lane. None of our men were hit, and after we had recovered from our momentary surprise we received orders to advance single file and turn left in the lane leading to Moore Street. At every movement we made, a further burst of firing greeted us but we gradually edged along until we reached the turn where we were temporarily under cover. About halfway down this left-angle lane was another lane to the right which ran at the back of the Moore Street houses and across the entrance was a roughly built barricade. There was another British machine-gun away up this lane which covered the entrance, and as each man darted past it there was a spurt of gun fire which spattered itself on the opposite wall. As each man rushed across and received his burst of fire, the next man would pause before making his dash. As there were some hundreds of us to get through it became a very tedious job, as well as nerve-racking, wondering who would be the first to be hit.

It happened that ~~the~~ Staff lieutenant, Samonn Bulfin (~~a copy of that name Bulfin who wrote "Reveille in London."~~), was the man in front of me; and as he rushed forward he slipped or tripped right in front of the barricade. I was horrified as a burst of firing swept down the lane, but the trip saved him and he scrambled up and on unharmed.

It might well be thought that some one of us was due for a bullet or two by now and my turn had come. I must confess that, laden as I was with my rifle, kit, and overcoat, a weary feeling came over me so that I could scarcely hope to get through, but there was nothing for it but to take my chance. So, waiting



for a lull, I rushed forward to the rattle of the gun and to my intense surprise and relief landed on the far side in the shelter of a friendly wall.

The rest of the men came one by one across until all were safely through without a single casualty.

It was lateX now and getting dark. Those ahead of us had commenced tunnelling operations through the houses in Moore Street connecting house to house with the object of approaching the British lines as closely as possible at the top of the street. I and some others being near the end of the line retired into an old stable to eat the little we had in our knapsacks and rest a bit. Meanwhile, the ^{tunnelling} ~~bunrowing~~ was proceeding ^{from house to} through the houses and later that night my companions and I went through ~~the tunnel~~ to lend a hand ~~at it~~. After some hours of this work we snatched a few uneasy hours sleep till Saturday dawned. I remember that morning going forward through the rooms ¹⁵ from house to house and talking to each little group, trying to find out our position and what was happening. None knew much except that activities were at a standstill and we just waited. Later in the morning, officers came through and told us the dread news that negotiations were proceeding with the British. Firing had ceased some time now except for the crack now and again of a sniper's rifle.

The hours passed slowly enough. Speculating on what was to come next, some of us managed to collect some food of sorts from the shops, others were unconcernedly shaving themselves and smartening up their appearance; some lay round asleep exhausted.

Towards late afternoon, we knew something was about to happen and presently word was passed along that we were to fall in with kit and rifle in the street below. The word "surrender" was whispered around and some began openly to protest that they would never do so and would fight to the end. However, our officers eventually got us all out in the street and we fell in as ordered. Presently, we saw Willie Pearse (who was a staff captain on ~~the~~ Pearse's personal staff) approaching with some

other officers. He stood before us and calling us to attention told us how hopeless our position was, and how ~~we~~ Pearse and the General Staff had decided that we must surrender. He praised the gallant stand which had been made against such overwhelming odds and then gave us our instructions. We were to march down Moore Street, through Henry Street and into Upper O'Connell Street where we would be met by the British and where we would make our surrender and lay down our arms. There were protesting murmurs from the ranks, and mutterings that we would never lay down our arms, when ~~Pearse~~ ^{Walter Pearse} called us to order and told us to uphold our honour with dignity, not to flinch at our final humiliation, but to realise that we had fought bravely for the Irish Republic and only overwhelming force had defeated us.

It was a sad moment for all of us, whether we felt defiant as some did or just dejected at our failure.

Soon ~~the~~ ^{our} officers' commands were ringing out and we marched briskly forward with our rifles at the slope for the last time. As we swung into O'Connell Street, we could see the British in hordes at the upper end of the street with their rifles at the ready evidently wondering whether we were going to make a surprise attack on them. We marched over opposite the Gresham and got the order to "left turn" facing across the street. The British still kept at a respectful distance till we got the order "two paces forward -- lay down arms -- two paces retire." This done -- we were now defenceless and with a rush the British came forward and surrounded our column. They were evidently surprised at the fewness of us and kept enquiring whether there were not more of us to come.

The British officers now began to pass down the ranks and with abusive remarks and sneers asked each his name and address, and searched our pockets for bombs and ammunition. We seemed to be standing there for hours when we got the order to "right turn" and we were marched under close escort into the green in front of the Rotunda Hospital where we were herded on



to the grass. By now, it was dark and we were ordered to sit or lie down on the plot. There were so many of us that, in order to comply, we had to lie on top of one another and we were ringed round by sentries, shoulder to shoulder with fixed bayonets. Here we were to spend the night, and sleep if we could -- and strange to say many of us did. A figure lay across my face and with difficulty I managed to wriggle free to find that it was none other than Desmond Ryan who in later years wrote "The Man called Pearse" and "The Story of a Success"

Another dawn was near and so for me ended Easter Week, 1916, but there began probably the greatest movement that Irish history has ever seen.

MEMORANDUM.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1613-21
BUREAU OF STATE MILITARY 1913-21

No. W.S. 370

The attached document in pencil script on a British Army Conduct Sheet, Army Form B.121, contains the instructions for the use of an invisible ink given to me by an alleged German Secret Service Agent, and referred to by me in the Statement I gave to the Bureau. The "X" referred to in the second line of the front page of the document was a handkerchief. Mr. Robert Brennan also refers to this Secret Service Agent in the instalment of his memoirs in the issue of The Sunday Press for the 5th February, 1950.

SIGNED:

Justin Murphy

DATE:

1st May 1950.

Get large plate, fill with boiling water. Leave it stand from three to four minutes. Empty into the sink. Fill with cold water, add five table spoons full of salt. Boil for 10 minutes. Turn out into a colander. Wash with cold water. Drain. Put in a bowl. Add a little oil. Season with salt & pepper. Serve hot.

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