

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BUREAU STAIRÉ MILÉATA 1913-21

NO. **W.S. 382**

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. **W.S.** 382.....

Witness

Mr. Thomas Mallin,
93 Melvin Road,
Terenure, Dublin.

Identity

Brother of Comd't. Michael Mallin, Citizen Army,
executed 1916.

Subject

Biographical note on his brother,
Comd't. Michael Mallin.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil

File No. **S.1033**.....

Form B.S.M. 2.

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1013-21

BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1013-21

No. W.S. 382

STATEMENT OF THOMAS MALLIN, 95 MELVIN ROAD,

TERENURE, DUBLIN.

I am eldest brother of Commandant Michael Mallin, Citizen Army, executed in 1916 for his part in the insurrection. He was a member of a family of nine, of which three boys and two girls were then living. His father was a boatwright and carpenter, and his grandfather had a small boat-building yard at City Quay, in Dublin, which had been in the family for five generations. His mother's maiden name, was Sarah Dowling. He was born on 1st December, 1874, at Ward's Hill in the parish of St. Nicholas of Myra, Francis St. He was thus 42 years of age when he was executed. He went to Denmark St. National Schools. His mother's brother, James Dowling, was a Pay Sergeant in the British Army, stationed at the Curragh, Co. Kildare.

Michael, when he was 15 years of age, and when he went on a holiday to his uncle, James Dowling at the Curragh, was persuaded by Mrs. Dowling to join the British Army as a band boy. He joined the 21st Royal Scots Fusiliers. He served 12 years in the British Army, of which 7 years were in India. He was there during the Boer War. His whole service was "Boy" service. He studied music while in the Army. I think he came home on discharge - time expired - from the Army in 1902. His uncle, James Dowling, had been pensioned from the Army, and had become a silk weaver in Atkinson's Poplin Factory in Dublin. He took Michael as an apprentice, which he could do as Michael's mother was a silk weaver. Michael in time, became a qualified silk weaver, and became Secretary of their Trade Union.

In 1903 he married Agnes Hickey in Chapelized Church. Her father had been a Fenian and was actually "out" in the Rising of '67. Michael's mother, Sarah Dowling, lost her post in a Macclesfield Silk Factory owing to expressing her sympathy with Allen, Larkin and O'Brien, the Manchester Martyrs. She had actually seen the attack on the prison van in Manchester.

While in India Michael refused to give a contribution towards a memorial to Queen Victoria. He was asked for an explanation. He gave the explanation that he could not subscribe as the English Monarch had to take an oath to uphold the Protestant Faith. This and other incidents he blamed for his failure to obtain promotion. About this time he wrote home for an Irish text book to endeavour to learn the Irish language. When his time in the Army had expired he was pressed to remain on as Band Sergeant, but he refused. He told his Adjutant that he wanted to go home, as he wanted to forget that he was ever a soldier.

He became very friendly with James Larkin during the Weavers' strike in 1911. I was not a member of the Citizen Army. I remember James Larkin saying it was necessary to form a Citizens' Defence Force to protect the citizens against the brutalities of the police. Larkin was asked; "What about guns, Jim?" He replied; "When the time comes, we can get them also. Sticks and broom handles are good enough in an Irishman's hands at present, and if Carson can raise an Army in the North, we can do so also". Michael was not then a member of the Citizen Army. I went to England in 1914 as I lost my job in the Corporation. I came home occasionally at holiday times, and I always made it a practice to visit Michael. His wife kept a shop in

Francis St. at this time. He made it a practice to call to see his father every Sunday evening at 20, High Road, Kilmainham. My father was a strong nationalist and Michael and he had many a political argument.

Michael was also a strong temperance advocate.

One one occasion when I visited him in Francis St., he pointed to a map on which he used to follow the progress of the war and said; "The British are going to make a landing at Salonika and it would be a good time for a row". While I was there he was called out and on his return he told me he had removed "stuff" from Volunteer H. Q. in Parnell Sq., as he had got word there was going to be a raid on it. He was of opinion that England was very much handicapped. He also said that if there was trouble, England would have only about 1,000 men in Ireland fit to fight. On one occasion he went to Finglas to organise fife and drum bands and as a cover for organising for the movement. He also had a boys' club in Capel St. whom he used to train up in the Dublin Mountains. He frequently went to Richmond Barracks - trafficking in rifles.

I came home from England on holiday on Good Friday 1916. I called on my mother on Easter Saturday and heard from her that Michael was missing. On Sunday I went to look for him with Jack Andrews, my brother-in-law. We went down Gardiner Street, and passing by Liberty Hall, I saw Tom Foran standing on the steps. He said; "Hello, Tom, are you looking for Mike?. Come on in". I went in and saw Mike in a room there. He said; "We were out to-day but there was no trouble". He brought me down to the basement and I saw a couple of hundred there. On the front seat were Connolly and Countess Markievicz. There was some drama being played. Mike told me to bring his wife and

children up to my home at Rutland Ave. Dolphins Barn as there would be no trouble there. He said; "It will be all confined to the city, but don't forget to be here at 3 o'clock tomorrow". At 12 o'clock on Easter Monday, I saw the Fianna Boys coming from the direction of Larkfield.

I set out to find Mike as he had asked me. I went by Dolphin's Barn and, passing by Marrowbone Lane Distillery, I saw the Volunteers in possession. I proceeded by Winetavern St., May Lane, North King St., Bolton St., to Mountjoy St., where I collected my brother-in-law Jack Andrews. We went as far as the Parnell Monument where I saw a troop of Lancers. Just before this I saw a Lancer leading a horse into a Veterinary Surgeons' in Frederick St. I parted with Jack Andrews and I went along by North St. Georges St. to Liberty Hall, but there was no one there. I returned home by Westland Row. On Tuesday I made my way to Stephen's Green and the College of Surgeons. I saw no sign of Mike. On coming down by Whitefriars St. Church, I found Agnes, Mike's wife, kneeling outside the Church. I went with her and brought her to my home in ^{Rutland Ave. Dolphin's Barn} ~~Francis St.~~...
Next day, I went and collected the children. I tried on Wednesday and Thursday to get in touch with Mike, but was unsuccessful.

After the surrender Agnes and I anxiously watched the papers for the results of the trials of the prisoners. We discussed what sentence Mike would get. Agnes spoke in terms of years, even 20 years. She never thought of a sentence of death.

On the night of 7th May, a military car came to the door, in which were a driver, a British Army corporal, and a member of the D.M.P. The Corporal told Agnes that her

husband wanted to see her immediately. I got into the car with her. On the way I ascertained from the D.M.P. man, that the sentence was -death. I spoke to Agnes and told her, that even if Mike's sentence was death, she should bear up and not make his sentence harder for him. We were brought to Kilmainham Gaol. In the yard at Kilmainham, Mrs. Kent and a man whom I took to be Eamon Kent's brother passed us and the man spoke to me and said; "Stick it". Agnes and I were brought into a cell; I went first. Mike was standing at the back wall. There was a small grid in the wall above his head. There was little light. He had an old green blanket around him, and he said it was very cold. He had several days' growth of beard and his eyes appeared to be fixed and glossy. He said; "Where is Agnes?" She ran towards him and said; "What is it?" He replied; "Death". She collapsed on the floor. When she revived, he said to her; "We have been married 15 years, and during that period we have had only one difference, and I hope you are satisfied about my explanation of that one incident. We have three sons and one daughter and another coming into the world. If it is a boy, call it "Michael" after me; if a girl, call it "Mary" after the Mother of God. I have a letter written which the Comdt. says will be delivered to you in the-morning. I will tell you all that is in the letter. It deals only with domestic matters. James is now thirteen and John is eleven. If it is the will of God, I want them to grow up to be big men and look after you. Una and little Joseph, whom I will never hold in my arms again, are dedicated to the Church. I want them in the service of God for the good of my soul. Try and find the dog. I saw it when I was being brought to the Castle, but I was afraid to call it, in case they would shoot it. I want you to promise me you will never marry again. I would like

to see James and John". I left immediately to get the two boys. I met the officer in charge of the guard who said to me, "I will never forget what I saw in that cell, to hear an aged woman say she was delighted to have her first son die for his country". He was referring to Mike's mother who was 78 years of age at the time and who had been to see him. The Officer was sympathising with her, and she did not want any sympathy, but told him she was delighted to have a son dying for Ireland. I returned with the two boys. Mike spoke to them, and said "James you are 13, John you are 11. I have given you as good an education as my father gave me. I am dying in the hope that we have made Ireland a better Ireland for you to live in. I want you to grow up to be big men, to work and keep your mother, and when the time comes, to do as I have done. Tom will look after you." I went to Wellington St. and got my sister and we returned to Kilmainham.

When I was left alone with him I said; "Is it worth it?" He replied; "It is worth it. Ireland is a grand country, but the people in it are rotters. The first Irishman to join the British Army was a bastard. The British Army is made up of them and gaolbirds and wasters. Some join through drink and some through lack of work. I will show my guards how an Irishman can die for his own country - in his own country. I can die praying. If these men are sent to France they will die cursing. They will die lying on the ground, moaning, and not able to see their mothers and their sweethearts. Tom, burn the picture with the set of drums. Tom, I have nothing to give. I have my life to give and I will give it for my country. I have many debts. Tell them that by my death I have paid all my debts. Look after Agnes and the children". He

put his arm round my neck, kissed me and put the letter he had written down my breast. His son Seamus has that letter. The priest had entered the cell and I knew the time had come. I left and went to the Archbishop's Palace in Drumcondra. I got no reply to my knocking at the door. The driver threw a handful of gravel at the window. Someone came down and opened the grid in the door. I told him about my brother dying in the morning. He said; "I will say first Mass for him in the morning. You know we are prisoners here".

All the family had collected at my mother's. I found them all crying. My mother said; "What is the use of crying - would it not be better for you to get down on your knees, and pray for him." I fell asleep. When I awoke, I gave Agnes, Michael's wife, the letter.

Signed; Thomas O'Connell

Date; 22 April 1950

Witness; P. J. Feely, Comdt.

