

# ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 476

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 476.....

**Witness**

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Dublin.

**Identity**

Lieutenant - Intelligence Officer  
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Police Officer do.

**Subject**

- (a) National activities 1914-1921;
- (b) Intelligence, Dublin, 1918.
- (c) Manufacture of arms at Inchicore, Dublin,  
1920-21.

**Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness**

Nil

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No. W.S. 476

STATEMENT BY JOSEPH KINSELLA

126 Lower Kimmage Road, Dublin.

In the summer of 1914 I first became associated with the Volunteer Movement. I was then employed by the G.S.R. at the Inchicore works.

Volunteer Company Inchicore, 1914.

A Volunteer Company was organised in Inchicore. The man responsible for the drilling was an Englishman named Niblett. I cannot recollect who the Company officers were. There was a lot of unrest and bickering going on in the Company as to who was eligible for promotion to commissioned and non-commissioned ranks.

I was a very indifferent member of the Volunteers at the time. I was more interested in the Labour movement than in the Volunteer organisation. I attended weekly parades as instructed, but when the split took place I severed my connection with both the Irish Volunteers and the National Volunteers.

Recollections of Easter Week.

Although my active association with the Volunteers had ceased I still kept in touch with prominent men associated with the movement. Through this association rumours were rife coming on to Easter Week, 1916, that serious action was contemplated on the part of the Volunteers for Easter Sunday. I, like a lot of other ex-members all of whom were in Emmet Hall, agreed that we would give all the assistance we possibly could if we were called upon to do so. I heard nothing further about the matter, and on Easter Sunday morning I read in the "Sunday Independent" that mobilisation orders for that day had been cancelled.

On Easter Monday morning I remember coming up Harold's

Cross and seeing a platoon of London or Liverpool Irish from Larkfield going towards the city. What struck me most about those men was the way they were armed, most of them were carrying twelve-foot pikes, and that, to my mind, was very ridiculous. These men formed up at the top of Harold's Cross Green and then moved off towards the city.

I knew nothing further about what happened in the city until about ten o'clock that night, because myself and another chap went off cycling towards the foot of the mountains, when we heard that the Volunteers had occupied various buildings throughout the city.

During that week the works in Inchicore were shut down, I think it was either Wednesday or Thursday, and we were shut out. I do not know why they were shut down, but some of the engineering staff, fitters and boiler-makers, were kept back, I think in connection with the provision of some sort of improvised armoured cars.

4th Battalion reorganised, 1916.

Following the release of some of the interned prisoners I was asked to take part in a reception committee at a céili held in Emmet Hall, and quite a number of the released prisoners turned up. Either then or some short time later I was approached by I think either Tommy Foran or Cathal O'Shannon and asked would I sound the men around Inchicore with a view to re-forming a Volunteer unit in Inchicore. I interviewed various men and got quite a number, I suppose I got thirty or forty, and some time in the dark evenings, about the end of September or October, 1916, we held our first Company meeting in the Emmet Hall. We used to meet there and talk over things generally. There were no parades or drills during that time. There were no officers elected at the time, but every man was supposed to do what he could to get others to

join up, especially men who had previously severed their connection with the Volunteers. The purpose of meeting was to recruit for the Volunteers.

This unit was known as the Inchicore Company at the time, but it afterwards became "F" Company of the 4th Battalion, Dublin Brigade.

After the general release of the prisoners about Christmas 1916 there were several meetings held in Emmet Hall of men from various units who had been released. At one of these meetings it was decided to segregate the men into various areas and to form Companies of the 4th Battalion. Halls were then secured for each Company. "A" Company had the Rossa Hall in Rathmines; "B" Company met in a private house somewhere off Francis Street; "C" Company met in St. James's pavilion in Dolphins Barn; "D" Company met in a house beside Cosgraves in James's Street right opposite the Union; I am not sure where "E" Company met, but I think they met somewhere round St. Enda's. My Company, "F" Company, met in the Emmet Hall, Inchicore. Later on there were more Companies. I would say that "A", "B", "C", "D", "E" and "F" Companies were well afoot about the beginning of 1918, because at the Ashe funeral we had a great turn-out and I remember being complimented on it.

When the Battalion was reorganised Séamus Murphy was its O.C. He remained with us only a short time before he went to Galway to start a newspaper there. I think Phil Clarke was his successor.

At that time Christie Byrne was Captain of my Company, Jimmy Donnelly, an ex-British soldier, was 1st Lieutenant and afterwards became Company Captain, I am not sure of the date, and Tommy O'Hanrahan was 2nd Lieutenant.

By early 1918 the Battalion was fairly well organised.

About that time I was transferred to the Battalion Staff as Intelligence Officer, with additional recruiting and police duties. I did not leave "F" Company to go into the Battalion. I was transferred, like all the other men, into my own area, into "D" Company under Joe McGrath, who was Captain of "D" Company at the time. From "D" Company I was transferred to the Battalion Staff. I held the rank of Lieutenant before I was appointed Battalion Intelligence Officer.

When I took up duty on the Battalion Staff the Battalion O.C., Ted Kelly, instructed me that for the present I was to concentrate on police work. For police duties a sergeant and fifty-four Volunteers drawn from the various Companies were placed at my disposal. These men were exempt from all other duties and did not report to their Companies at all, they were concentrating on police work.

As I have already said, the police unit comprised a section from each Company, the idea being that each section would deal with crime in its own Company area. I visited each section in its own area once a week. At these meetings crime in the area was discussed, and action taken where necessary.

#### Police Work.

The following is an example of our police work. There was an old lady living alone in Crumlin. She had a little property of her own and her savings amounted to about £80. It was reported to me that thieves had broken into her house and stolen her savings. I instructed members of my police unit to watch out for any individuals who appeared to be lavish in spending money. Shortly afterwards I was told that two men, Reilly and Coleman, who were not normally well off, were spending money much beyond their means. This threw suspicion on them. We arrested both men and extracted a confession from each of them. By a little rough handling they openly

admitted that they had broken into this lady's house and had stolen the money. Reilly had most of the money, amounting to between £50 and £60, in his possession. He explained that the balance had been spent on the purchase of a gramophone, a watch and wearing apparel. He surrendered all the cash he had and most of the articles purchased with the remainder of the money. These articles were later taken back to where they had been purchased, and when the position was explained to the proprietor the money was refunded.

These two men were brought before a Battalion Court at which Peadar Ó Briain presided. The court was held in a cowshed at the rear of Wellington House, Templeogue. The prisoners were defended by a young solicitor named Burke, a relation of Liam T. Cosgrave. The prosecuting officer was a man by the name of Andy Walsh who was a Company Captain. The case was presented as legally as we could manage. The sentence of the court was that the cash available would be paid over in full to the woman from whom it had been stolen, and that the outstanding balance was to be paid by weekly instalments by both culprits. Any damage that had been done to the house was to be made good. Glass had to be replaced in a window which had been broken, and paint had to be procured for painting round the glass.

The case ended very satisfactorily. The lady was paid in full and expressed her appreciation of the way in which we had dealt with the matter.

Another instance was where a cock of hay was stolen from a field on Kirwan's farm in the vicinity of Templeogue. The local I.R.A. police officers were put to work on this case and the crime was brought home to the individual responsible. He admitted having stolen the hay but stated that he was in bad circumstances. He said he had two horses and carts working

for the Corporation, but that he had not enough fodder to feed the horses.

This man was brought before the court, already mentioned, at Wellington House but owing to a number of other small cases being held there, his case was not gone into. He was put on remand until another court would be held. He was eventually brought up before a court held in St. Enda's, at which Commandant Ted Kelly, Battalion O.C., presided. He was defended by a solicitor, and one of the Company officers acted as prosecutor. The decision given against the man was that he would buy in the market an equal quantity of hay of the same quality as he had stolen and put it in the same position in the field as he had stolen the hay from. He bought the hay as directed, but he put it into the woman's barn, as she did not want it put into the field. The woman was quite pleased with the decision given and the action taken.

A number of similar cases, too numerous to mention, were effectively dealt with by our courts.

During the 1918 elections I had instructions from my Battalion Commandant to concentrate on Rathmines-Harold's Cross area, which was regarded as a pro-British district at the time.

On polling day I posted four men at the polling booth in Harolds Cross to function in the same way as the D.M.P. All went well until the polling booth was closed and the ballot boxes were about to be transferred by horse transport to the Town Hall in Rathmines. The D.M.P. got into the wagon in order to guard the boxes on the journey to the Town Hall, leaving no room for the I.R.A. police. I objected to this straight away and told the D.M.P. that my men would also have to accompany the boxes. They would not agree with me, so

We uncoupled the horses from the wagon. After a short parley the D.M.P. agreed to allow my men to travel with the boxes. Immediately the four I.R.A. men jumped into the wagon, leaving room for only one D.M.P. man to travel with them. The result was that the D.M.P. had to hire a private car and follow the wagon to Rathmines Town Hall, where I posted the four I.R.A. men, and they were locked up in the Town Hall with the police for the night.

Intelligence Work.

Following the 1918 elections the Battalion Commander decided that I was to withdraw gradually from police duties and concentrate on Intelligence work.

A short time afterwards a Battalion Council meeting was held. At this meeting the question of Intelligence was discussed and the manner in which it was to be organised was fully gone into. I was instructed to visit the Companies and select a section of eight men and a sergeant who would be suitable for Intelligence work. Their suitability would depend on the nature and place of employment. In other words, the men selected would have to be employed in places which would enable them to supply the type of information we were looking for. Men were selected from Guinness's Brewery, from the various banks in the city, from post offices and from the railway. We had men who were employed on boats at the Quays, and we had shop-keepers. We had quite a number of men from the water works and various other places in the Corporation. We had one man who was employed in the Kildare Street Club, and we had tram conductors and drivers. We had men who were employed as civilian clerks in different barracks in the city.

Our agents who were employed in banks were very useful to us in the matter of giving us gold for notes. Dáil Éireann at the time was very anxious to procure all the gold that could

could possibly be collected. I often exchanged up to £20 for gold in a week. This gold I handed over to the Brigade Intelligence Officer. Shop-keepers who were our agents were advantageous to us in a similar capacity.

With regard to our agents in the sub post offices in James's Street, Rathmines and Rathgar, I had an arrangement with the chief postman in each of these offices to supply any letters going to enemy agents, military or police. From time to time I supplied these postmen with lists of the people concerned, and in this way letters and correspondence in which I was interested came into my hands. These letters were immediately read by me, and where I learned that people in our Battalion area were supplying information to the Castle or military authorities about I.R.A. men we altered the letters by substituting the names of people known to be friendly to the British authorities. Otherwise the contents of the letters were substantially the same. These letters were then given back to the postmen and would be delivered in the ordinary way. The original letters were destroyed. Usually the writers of these letters were anonymous, but in some cases where the senders signed their names we sent word to the D.M.P., anonymously, that these people were actively associated with the I.R.A. In some cases the police took action against them, with the result that they were dismissed from their employment. We found this a most effective way of dealing with such people.

Letters which I regarded as very important I sent on to the Brigade Intelligence Officer, and there my responsibility for them ended.

With regard to military barracks, we did not succeed in getting many agents in them. I remember we had two clerks in G.H.Q., one labourer in Collins Barracks and one labourer

in Portobello Barracks. The G.H.Q. clerks were Seán Tumbleton and Martin Hoare.

We had instructions to list the addresses and employment of practically all the Volunteers in the Battalion area whether they were members of our Battalion or not. This list was held by me and a copy of the list was held by the Company officer of each particular area. Evidently the list must have been sent to G.H.Q. because in some cases enquiries came back about Volunteers who were employed in military barracks. I think it was as a result of this listing that the two men employed in British G.H.Q. were appointed Intelligence agents there.

*Intelligence officers*  
A conference of Battalion officers was held at least once a week under the direction of the Brigade Intelligence Officer. Any information that he wanted about individuals or British agents in each Battalion area was given to him at such conferences.

We were continually on the watch for strangers moving in and taking up residence in the Battalion area. When it was reported to me that a stranger had moved into the area I instructed members of my staff who resided in the area to find out all they could about the stranger. This was done usually through milk-men, maids and local shopkeepers. When I had sufficient information about the stranger I passed it on to the Brigade Intelligence Officer.

We also had to report on members of the British military and police forces residing in our area. In this way it came to my notice that a number of British agents were residing in the Rathmines and Rathgar areas. I took particulars of their addresses and passed on this information to the Brigade Intelligence Officer. I remember that there were two or three agents stopping in Salem House, Upper Rathmines. There were

two agents residing either at No. 19 or No. 20 Highfield Road, Rathgar. There were two at 18 Leinster Road, and there was one in a house in Reuben Street.

Shortly before Bloody Sunday I was asked to prepare a map of the approaches, laneways, etc., to the houses that I had listed. I did not know what this was for, but I suspected that some action was to be taken.

I took no actual part in the shootings that took place on Bloody Sunday, apart from being present at Whitefriars Street Church on that Sunday morning, where a number of men selected from my Battalion assembled. I knew what they were mobilised for and I asked them to report to me when the operations had been carried out. Later on that day I was told that our Battalion had not carried out any operations, that they had had been called off at the last moment.

In my capacity as Battalion Intelligence Officer another of my duties was to report on what were known as safe houses within my area, that is to say houses which could be used by men on the run, whose occupants were sympathetic and were not likely to come under the suspicion of the British authorities. It is interesting to note that amongst the people in this category were Unionists and Jews.

While I was Battalion Intelligence Officer and by virtue of my employment in the Inchicore works, I was in a position to repair Volunteers' damaged guns, and defective weapons were often sent to me to have them repaired. In addition we were making a few grenades in Inchicore.

I knew that there were many Volunteers with technical knowledge working in Inchicore works, but as they belonged to other Battalions I could not approach them to ask them to help

me in any way. I clearly saw that if they could be moulded into a working unit it would be a decided advantage in the making of munitions and the repairing of guns. With this in view I approached the Director of Munitions, Seán Russell, and suggested to him that he should get in touch with the Battalion Commandants of these men and asked them to instruct the men to work under my direction; if Russell thought the scheme feasible he should come to Inchicore, where I would introduce him to a few of the principal men. Almost immediately a meeting was arranged, I think in Emmet Hall, and Seán Russell met the men there. The result of that meeting was that I went round the various departments and instructed these men in what I wanted done.

In the foundry department we found that we could turn out anything up to 36 grenades per day. In the machine department we found that we could do a lot of drilling and tapping on those grenades. I should say that in about a fortnight the scheme was working splendidly. We were turning out anything up to 40 or 50 finished grenades a week.

One point about these grenades was that they were of a standard pattern and the parts were inter-changeable, which was a big advantage to the men in the country as we could make necks, strikers, anvils and springs.

As our work progressed we saw that we could not get the grenade castings tapped and drilled without danger of the men being caught and being dismissed. I put that problem to Seán Russell, who told me to send on the grenades in their rough state to him and he would get them tapped and drilled. I believe this work was carried out at Twynams Mineral Water works, <sup>S.B.R. and Co.</sup> in Moss Street, at a place in Parnell Street and at a place at Leonard's Corner. I supplied materials for moulding to these places.

As the grenades were made in the foundry in Inchicore they were taken up by some of our men employed there and wheeled out along with burnt sand into a dump at the back of the foundry. A sweep named O'Neill with a place in Vicar Street had a horse and cart working daily drawing this burnt sand from the foundry to his store in Vicar Street. This sand was used to make his soot heavy for selling to artificial manure factories. The driver used to be told that there was a certain number of grenades in a corner of the dump. He would load the grenades on his cart, cover them with sand and leave them at his place in Vicar Street. They were taken from there by my men and distributed wherever they were to go by pony-car or van.

Another way the grenades were got out was by a man named O'Donoghue who was employed by the building department of the G.S.R. His duty was to convey sand, cement, slates and other building materials to various parts of the city, the North Wall, Kingsbridge, etc. Instead of a bag or two of cement he would take a bag or two filled with grenades, and there would be no watch on him going out. These would be left in the Blanchardstown Mills stores in Thomas Street. He used to buy his oats and feeding stuff for his horse there. One of my men was a yardman there and he took in the grenades and kept them there until they were collected.

Inchicore works was being raided about once a fortnight by the British authorities, but they never found anything. They had a military post consisting of about six or eight men there all the time.

Some of the principal men employed on the making of munitions were Jack Brocklebank, now a driver in Dublin Castle, Bill O'Brien, now working in the Fairview Cinema, Mick Morrissey Stores Department, Inchicore, and Bill Mooney.

Belfast Boycott.

During the Belfast Boycott we concentrated mostly on tobacconists' shops, on Gallagher's cigarettes and tobacco. This stuff was taken from the shops and in some cases when we had petrol or paraffin oil we would make a display by burning it. In one case there was such a quantity of twist and plug tobacco and cigarettes, and knowing that we could not destroy it, we took it to Keywells, the chemists in Kenilworth Buildings, where it was stored. Afterwards when a lot of our men had been arrested and interned in Ballykinlar, the tobacco and cigarettes were sent to them, but before doing so we extracted the cigarettes from the packets and put them into "Slainte" packets with a few "Slainte" cigarettes on top.

4th Battalion reorganisation.

About September, 1920, the 4th Battalion was reorganised and four additional Companies added to the existing strength. By this time the Companies had become over-strong and unwieldy, and for that reason it was considered necessary to add additional Companies to the Battalion. John Dowling was Battalion O.C., and I think the Vice-O.C. was Kit Byrne.

The Company officers were as follows:-

- "A" Company - Harry Murray, Captain.  
Seán Treacy, who has a shop in Ballsbridge,  
1st Lieutenant.
- "B" Company - Liam McDonagh, Captain.  
McCormack, 1st Lieutenant.
- "C" Company - Jack Joyce, Captain.  
Paddy O'Brien, who was killed in Wexford,  
1st Lieutenant.
- "D" Company - Liam Ó Briain, who replaced Joe McGrath.  
Tommy Doyle, 1st Lieutenant.
- "E" Company - F.X. Coughlan, Captain.  
Tod Andrews and Frank Burke were the two  
Lieutenants.
- "F" Company - Jim Donnelly, Captain.  
I do not know who the Lieutenants were.
- "G" Company - John McCurtain, Captain.  
Frank Dowling, 1st Lieutenant.  
Paddy Coughlan, 2nd Lieutenant.

"H" Company - Merryman, I do not know his Christian name, was Captain. I think he is in the Department of Posts and Telegrams. I do not know who his Lieutenants were.

"I" Company - Tom O'Hanrahan, Captain. His address is No. 5 Ring Terrace, Inchicore.

"K" Company - Jimmy Kenny, Captain. I do not know who his Lieutenants were.

The reorganisation did not affect my position at all. I still carried on in my capacity as Battalion Intelligence Officer, but my staff was increased to cater for the new Companies.

#### Kilmainham escapes

The escape of Frank Teeling, Simon Donnelly and Ernie O'Malley from Kilmainham took place in February, 1921. To the best of my belief the first intimation we got that these men were to be rescued was through Jim Donnelly, Captain of "F" Company. He stated that he had contacted a British Army Corporal stationed in Kilmainham jail who was very friendly towards us and had great sympathy for the prisoners in the jail. The Corporal, or one of his men, discussed the possibility of the escape of the prisoners. Various ways and means were discussed.

Jim Donnelly reported to the Commandant of the 4th Battalion the discussions which he had with the British N.C.O. Arrangements were made to have the three men released into the compounds surrounding the jail, where members of "F" Company would be outside the wall with a rope ladder. This ladder had been made in the Inchicore works, it was light and very strong. Certain men were told off for the rescue work, and the time was arranged with the Corporal when the three prisoners would be in the compound. The first night we went to Kilmainham to rescue the prisoners we uncoiled the rope, fastened a weight to the end of it and threw it over the wall. The rope landed on top of a galvanised shed in the compound and created a terrible racket. The result was that two girls and two soldiers who had been

courting up the laneway at the end of the barracks came down to see what the noise was. After a hurried consultation between Captain Donnelly and the others it was decided, in order to avoid discovery, to arrest the two girls and the two soldiers. We retrieved the rope ladder, and the soldiers and the girls were taken into custody and placed in Miss Flood's house at Fox-and-Geese. They were kept there for about a week, I think. They were locked in separate rooms, the girls in one room and the soldiers in another, and the windows were covered with brown paper. There was a guard placed over them. They had been blindfolded while being taken to Miss Flood's house. They were liberated after the three prisoners were rescued from the jail, and they had nothing to complain about regarding the treatment they had received while in our custody.

There were four or five attempts made on subsequent nights before the rescue of the three prisoners was eventually effected, and I think it was then effected through G.H.Q.

Captain Jim Donnelly was the first man to conceive the idea of rescuing the prisoners.

#### Vincent Fouvargue

When I left the Battalion temporarily to deal with munitions under Seán Russell, Vincent Fouvargue was appointed Intelligence Officer of the 4th Battalion, which appointment he held for about three or four weeks. On handing over I gave him very little information about his duties, or about who he was to contact. From the outset I personally did not place a lot of trust in him, because on the morning that he took over from me he appeared to me to be too inquisitive about the movements of Michael Collins and the G.H.Q. staff generally. He wanted to know where they could be located at any time. He said that he had big things in view, and that it would be to the advantage of the movement generally if he was in a position to get in touch

with the principal men with the least possible delay. From his attitude I there and then formed the opinion, rightly or wrongly, that he was inclined to overstep his position. I did not feel too happy about him and I discussed him with Seán Dowling.

It transpired that my impressions of this man were correct. I told him of two meeting places of the Intelligence staff, one of Company Intelligence held at Rathmines Road and one of Brigade Intelligence held at Seville Place. A short time after giving him this information both these places were raided. I suspected him then and sent my suspicions to Intelligence. Whatever action was taken then was taken by them. The Black and Tans raided the Company Intelligence meeting and the whole staff, I think there were eight or nine of them, were arrested.

I was on my way to Seville Place to warn the Brigade Intelligence Officer that the place might be raided, but I was met and turned back by the 3rd Battalion Intelligence Officer, Geoff Keating. The hall in Seville Place was raided, but there was nobody in it. Some papers were got in the raid, and as a result the Brigade Intelligence Officer, Peter Ennis, was arrested a few days afterwards. I think he got two years' imprisonment. He was badly beaten up, and all his teeth were knocked down his throat. He was Tom Ennis's brother.

I was now confirmed in my suspicions that Fouvargue was giving away information and that he was responsible for the raids and for the arrests. Fouvargue knew that the British had acted directly on his orders and he also knew that suspicion would fall on him immediately. I do not know what transpired later but apparently he was arrested for his own protection. Some time following his arrest he was taken out with some other prisoners one night in a lorry. When the lorry stopped on the South Circular Road, Dolphins Barn, to question somebody passing by Fouvargue jumped from it and escaped. He was later shot

in England by the I.R.A.

I had to keep on working at Intelligence as well as munitions until the Truce came. Then I went into Oriel House.

SIGNED Joseph Kiwella

DATE 16<sup>th</sup> February 1951.

WITNESS William Jerry Bond.

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