

ROINN



COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 482.....

Witness

Miss Rose McNamara,
35 Upper Ormond Quay,
Dublin.

Identity

Member of Inghini na h-Eireann 1906-1921;
Vice-Commandant Cumann na mBan 1916.

Subject

- (a) Her national associations 1906-1921;
- (b) Marrowbone Lane Distillery, Easter Week 1916.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil

File No. S.197.....

Form B.S.M. 2.

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1013-21
BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1013-21
No. W.S. 482

Statement of Miss Rose McNamara,
35 Upper Ormond Quay,
Dublin.

I was a member of Inghiní na hÉireann organisation since about 1906. We used to meet in a room in North Frederick Street. Madame Gonne McBride was not during that time as far as I remember at that address more than twice. On one of these occasions Helena Molony was giving a lecture and I was greatly impressed as she was a lovely speaker. It was Miss Perolz who brought me there. Her sister had been married a couple of years to my brother. When I joined first we met at No.6 Harcourt Street in the house owned by Sinn Féin.

We used to sew for the poor and arrange for the meals for the school children. We displayed some of our work at the Aonach that used to be held in the Mansion House before Christmas. We always placed a wreath bound in green, white and yellow ribbons on the Wolfe Tone memorial stone at the corner of Stephen's Green. When we went back to see it next morning we always found the ribbons had been removed. The Inghiní used to arrange pageants but I never took part in them. They also had a brake in the Manchester Martyrs' procession to Glasnevin.

The most important outdoor event I can remember was when King George and Queen Mary drove in procession through the city. We organised a demonstration against,

the State visit. There was a triumphal arch of greenery erected for them at Leeson Street Bridge where they were to enter the city. I and another girl were told to go there and give out handbills denouncing England. The crowd which was entirely composed of "loyalists" - and I may say it comprised practically the whole population of Dublin - showed itself very hostile to us and we had to keep on the move. Some of the Inghiní were in a brake and went along Grafton Street on their way back from Smithfield where an anti-loyalist demonstration had been held. At the bottom of Grafton Street, outside Yeates' at the corner of Nassau Street, there were two illuminated pictures, one of the King, the other of the Queen. Helena Molony, who was in the brake, drew a stone from her pocket and aimed it so well that she smashed one of the pictures. She was arrested shortly after, but we had all scattered by that time.

In 1914 after the foundation of the Volunteers, Madame Gonne McBride thought of founding a branch of the Red Cross organisation in Ireland to co-operate with them and wrote about it to the Red Cross authorities abroad. These refused to give sanction unless we affiliated with the British Red Cross, which we naturally refused to do. It was then the purely Irish organisation of Cumann na mBan was started and the Inghiní na hÉireann immediately became the first branch of it. I have the nominal roll of all the members prior to 1916 and shall lend it to the Bureau to copy. I have also a roll of the 25 members who were on active service with the Volunteers in Jameson's Distillery, Marrowbone Lane in 1916, and of the other 6 members allocated to other outposts. You will notice from it that our Branch was the only one that had military ranks at this early date. Our Commandant was

Eileen Walsh - now Mrs. Martin Murphy; I was Vice-Commandant; Miss Marcella Cosgrove (now deceased) was Quartermaster, and May Byrne was Section Commander. Seamus Pouch one of the Fianna boys, who drilled us, gave us these ranks.

For some time before the Rising we marched in the public parades, for instance, the O'Donovan Rossa funeral. We made field dressings, sold flags and made collections to raise funds for arms and equipment of the Volunteers. We learned and practised First Aid and military drill. At one stage Madame Markievicz gave us rifle practice, but that may have been after the Rising.

On Good Friday, 1916, I spent the day making field dressings in No. 2 Dawson Street, having previously purchased the materials. There was a big crowd of us there and we worked very hard to ensure that there would be enough dressings for the Volunteers for the manoeuvres that were soon to take place. I had nothing to do on Saturday. That night we were given our instructions for the Sunday mobilisation and what followed is fully described in a memorandum I wrote in the beginning of June, 1916, when the events were still fresh in my memory, and which you may have copied for the Bureau.

Memorandum from Memory, having to destroy the original.

Craobh Inghinidhe, Cumann na mBan.

Easter Sunday, April 23rd, 1916. Was mobilised to parade at Mount Street. Waited there for further orders. We were dismissed to attend at 6 Harcourt Street. We waited there for some time and there were all sorts of rumours about. Finally, our Commandant dismissed us with

orders to be ready for a further mobilisation and not to leave the city during the week end.

On Easter Monday, April 24th, I was mobilised for Weaver's Hall, Cork Street, full uniform and equipment, for 10 o'clock a.m. We formed up outside the hall, 25 in number, where we marched to Emerald Square for orders from Commandant E. Ceannnt; got orders to follow Company of Volunteers just forming up. We marched behind until we reached the Distillery in Marrowbone Lane (used as forage stores for the British Government) at 12 o'clock. I next saw Captain Murphy who was in charge of Volunteers, 4th Battalion, knock at small gate and demand same to be opened in the name of the Irish Republic. As soon as we got in prisoners were made of the Lodgekeeper's, also a soldier in khaki. We remained in an old cellar all day, waiting for work to do. We heard heavy firing from both sides all the day. There were four workmen on the premises who were also made prisoners but were later blind-folded and were let out at dark. One slight casualty - P. McGrath - which we dressed with success. Firing continues till dark; reinforcements of 60 men arrive in the evening; towards evening two women bring us in some food, tea, etc., which we needed badly. We divided up into squads and posted ourselves in close touch with the different firing lines, and lay on sacks of oats or grains, which was very uncomfortable. M. Cosgrave, the Q.M., and self were up very early to prepare some sort of breakfast for the men.

Tuesday, April 25th. Quinn's Bakery cart was held up and some bread captured, also two cans of milk from a passing cart. Some visitors called. Two enemy snipers taken down by our men; light firing all day. About 11 p.m. two clergymen from Mount Argus came to hear confessions; all the girls - 22 in all - (3 having gone away) - went to confession and I believe most of the men. Priest brought up to the firing line on top and blessed all the camp.

Wednesday, April 26th. 19 chickens captured from messenger boy. Quiet day. We cooked the chickens for dinner, having to take them up out of the pots with bayonets, not having any forks or utensils for cooking. Dinner very successful. Captain's wife (Mrs. Murphy) came in to stay with us. We emptied out the oats from the sacks and made the beds? more comfortable; very cold. Miss Cosgrave or myself did not sleep and we envied the other girls, some of whom were snoring. We both keep watch while the guard gets a well deserved sleep. Captain calls the men together and addresses them with good news. Very slight firing today.

Thursday, 27th. Three live calves captured; one was killed by a Volunteer who was a butcher (Bob Holland) for dinner for Friday. (God forgive us). One of our snipers (Mick Lister) slightly grazed on the forehead which we dressed. Heavy sounds of machine guns (or cannons) in the distance all night. We keep on praying.

Friday, 28th. Up early for breakfast; we fried veal cutlets and gave the men a good feed. We had a meat dinner, potatoes, etc. 9 live chickens commandeered.

Captain tells us that the sounds we heard during the night was the Four Courts attack.

We had a few slight accidents to dress. The password for the night was "I know you". The green flag won at St. Enda's College was hoisted over our fort. I was brought up to the firing lines to see two of the enemy soldiers lying dead - on top of one another - just outside. Some of our men go out and take their rifles off the bodies. We also saw the republican flag over Jacob's.

Saturday, 29th. Load of cabbage captured.

About 2 o'clock a female spy was captured on the canal and brought in to the fort. The Captain ordered me to get some of the girls with myself and search her. I take the Captain's wife and some of the girls. We were afraid this person might be a man, in woman's clothes, so we had to be careful as she was a very masculine-looking woman. We each of us had our knives in case of a fight, but she was harmless. We did not find anything on her, so she was let go with a warning. We would not get to dinner till 6 o'clock p.m. and we were starving, not having eaten anything since breakfast at 7 o'clock a.m. The password for the night - "This is Saturday night". Saw fierce fires in the city from here; fell asleep for the first time this week. One of the lads (Harry Pender) brings up some tea to our loft at 12 o'clock a.m.; got great shock when he flashed lantern in our faces, not being allowed to have any lights for fear of the enemy.

There was a call to arms about 2 o'clock a.m. But nothing serious; all well. A house across fields discovered. Beds and blankets were ordered to be commandeered for us. I wash my blouse for Sunday.

Captain sent to Mount Argus for priest to say Mass in fort on Sunday. M.C., the Q.M., whom I was with all the time and myself, go around to the front of the fort; great view of the city. We were halted by the sentry to give the password which we utterly forgot; we got such a fright; but we all laughed heartily after; very quiet day to-day.

Sunday, April 30th. Up early. Breakfast cooked for men as usual. Get style for Sunday (clean blouse); got ready for Mass. Captain calls all the men together about 12 o'clock p.m. in the back yard; we all assemble too. He addresses us all in the most soul-stirring manner. He asked if there were any complaints about food or sleep. All answered "No", and if they were prepared to fight to the last, even tho' the old enemy whom we were fighting, played her old game and starved us out. They all shouted "Yes". He then quoted a passage from history - thus -: "Greater love no man hath than to lay down his life for his friend", and if all ended well, being Sunday to have a sing song in the evening, to which the brave cailini were to be invited; cheers from the men. All then dispersed to dinner. Not having a reply from the priest about Mass, prayers to be said instead. Then about 4 o'clock heard cheering at front gate. Rev. Fr. Augustine and Commandant McDonagh came in motor car to tell about surrender. Self and Miss Cosgrave (Q.M.) gave priest some refreshments. He tells us all the sad news. McDonagh leaves crying; great commotion. Captain and Captain Con Colbert appear. We are told to go away home quietly. (But no), just then an accident occurs to one of our men to whom we rendered first aid. Captain files up all the men when in comes Commandant Ceannt with enemy officer to accept the surrender. We (Cumann na mBan) all collected in front of the fort and shake the hands of

all the men and gave them all "God Speed", and told them to cheer up. Some were sad and some trying to be cheerful. After command from Captain to form fours all marched out the front gate through city to St. Patrick's Park (Ross Road), all the girls marching behind, singing; one of our girls picked up a rifle in the street, carried it on her shoulder. We all (22 of us) gave ourselves up and marched down between two lines of our brave men.

We waited until all the arms were taken away. The men gave each of us their small arms to do as we liked with, thinking we were going to go home, but we were not going to leave the men we were with all the week to their fate; we decided to go along with them and be with them to the end whatever our fate might be. Some of the girls had as many as three revolvers; some had more. The Sergeant in Richmond Barracks told us we would be searched in Kilmainham, so after a while we reluctantly gave them up to him. After all the arms were taken from the men at Ross Road we were all marched under military escort to Richmond Barracks, the girls singing all the time amidst the insults of the soldiers and the people along the route. We were then separated from the men and led away to the far side of the Barracks for the night where we got tea, etc. On our way we met a lot of the men going to England, to the Camps. We were asked to give our word of honour not to try to escape or break any glass, etc. Our treatment here was not too bad. At 9.30 next morning - May 1st - we, 22 in all, were marched off under heavy military escort to Kilmainham. Arrived there about 10 o'clock. We were all lined up: names taken (which we gave in Irish, which the soldiers couldn't understand). We were then put into cells in fours until we were searched. We were then divided up into threes and left in cells, carefully locked, bolted and barred. We were given some dinner at 12 o'clock - soup,

meat and dog biscuits. Skilly at 4 o'clock p.m.; no spoons: we had to drink and eat as best we could.

Tuesday, May 2nd. Awakened very early by sounds of shots outside our windows. Exercise for half an hour. Very cold. We then arranged a sixteen-hand reel which we danced and enjoyed much to the alarm of the five armed soldiers on guard of us and two wardresses.

Wednesday, May 3rd. More shots during daybreak. Exercise as usual; not allowed to dance today. Singing in the cells since we came here. Some of the girls dancing in their cells. We were examined by the military in courtyard; asked all sorts of questions as to the names of the officers, etc., and who issued the mobilisation, etc. But they got no information from any of the girls. More terrible sounds of shots this morning.

Saturday, May 6th. Still here. No shots today (T.G.). Governor announced. Visits cells with medical officer. Good dinner today. Being raining were only allowed along corridors for exercise. We were told to write home for clothes. Visit from Rev. Fr. Albert. He consoled us very much. One girl discharged today (lucky girl). We hear great cheering and commotion outside gate, very late in the night; great commotion inside also.

Sunday, May 7th. Up at 6.30 a.m. Breakfast not given till 10 o'clock. We are told to get ready to hear Mass (very glad); brought to Prison Chapel. Mass celebrated by Rev. Fr. McCarthy of James's Street. We saw all the men to whom we kissed hands from our place in the gallery - Eamon Ceannt, Mallin, etc. More

prisoners arrived today - Countess Plunkett, etc., who was surprised to hear us all singing in our cells.

Monday, May 8th. Loud reports of shots at daybreak. We say prayers for whoever it was; heard terrible moans; then a small shot; then silence. We heard from one of our members that poor Con Colbert, E. Ceannt, Mallin and Seán Heuston had been shot. Con Colbert had sent for Seumas Murphy's wife to give her a message. Another visit from Rev. Fr. Albert at 6 o'clock p.m. Just after going to bed we heard great commotion outside our cell and heard that prisoners were going to be released. Our cells were then ~~then~~ thrown open and we were told to get ready. We were going to be released. We danced with joy and put on our clothes; went downstairs where were assembled a crowd of British officers and the Governor of the Jail, with candles lighting (having no gas), also Rev. Fr. McCarthy. Our names were called out and we were given a lecture, to be good in future or else. The priest said to us to wait till morning on account of martial law as we might be shot. 34 of the girls went home - led by the priest. We, 22 in all, stayed over in the Jail till morning. 12 were detained. We went back into our cells where we talked all night; got breakfast next morning and left "His Majesty's Hotel" at twenty minutes past 7 o'clock a.m. Tuesday, May 9th, for home.

ROSE McNAMARA

Vice Commandant

CRAOBH INGHINIDHE, CUMANN NA mBAN.
4/6/1916.

P. S.

On the route to Richmond Barracks we were right behind Commandant Thomas McDonagh and Major McBride. When we reached somewhere about Kilmainham, both Major McBride and

T. McDonagh said: "That's right, girls, sing away" and Major McBride said to me: "Sing away, girls. You'll be alright. You'll be out tomorrow", and I replied "and what about you" meaning all the men. He said, very sadly, "Ah no. We won't be out. We'll be shot".

I went home. None of us felt very happy at our release after hearing almost every morning the shots that killed our leaders. A long period of depression followed. It was not until 1917 after the return of the prisoners that our spirits began to revive. We started re-organising then, both Cumann na mBan, Volunteers and the Fianna. We got any amount of new members into our Inghiní Branch and re-started our drilling and first aid class at 6 Harcourt Street and at Mrs. Houlihan's in Ushers Quay. At Harcourt Street we had already been organising the distribution of the National Aid funds. Each of our members had a district allotted to her. Mine was the North Strand. The majority of the dependants received us with gratitude, although there were a few who were difficult to please, as usually happens in such cases. They all had a hard struggle to keep their homes going in the absence of the bread-winners.

When the bulk of the prisoners came home just before Christmas we all got up early in the morning to meet them at Westland Row and give them a rousing welcome.

We were organised in a military way in the spring of 1917, being given our ranks. Miss Kennedy was appointed Captain and I, First Lieutenant. It was also in that year that the University Branch members, amounting to 34, joined

up with the Inghini who numbered 95 at this time.

We were on duty at the lying-in-state of Thomas Ashe in the Mater Hospital, regulating the constant stream of people who came to view the remains. A few of the girls were in the room.

In June, 1917, I was present at the meeting at Beresford Place at which Inspector Mills was killed by a blow of a hurley stick. We knew the lad who dealt the blow. He had no intention of killing the Inspector and we prayed hard that he would not be caught and he was not.

I was present as a spectator at the Sinn Féin Convention in October, 1917.

In 1918 our Branch took part in the Anti-Conscription activities. We were on duty in the City Hall where the declaration of protest was signed.

At the General Election of 1918 the Cumann na mBan were assigned to the different battalion areas. Our Branch was in the 3rd Battalion area; that was in the south city. Some of the girls canvassed the houses but I did very little of that as I had not the time. On the polling day the members were assigned to the different booths, preparing meals, etc. for the people who were working there, and ushering in the voters.

Our Branch marched with the rest of Cumann na mBan at Richard Coleman's funeral in December, 1918. It was a dreadful day and we marched all the way to Swords. It was the first time I ever was in that area. Fortunately some of us got a lift back in a brake.

During the hunger-strike in Mountjoy Gaol in 1919, we took up our position outside, praying and singing hymns. One of the G-men turned the hose on us and tried to disperse us by spraying us with carbide and water. One of the girls defied him and put up her umbrella, refusing to budge.

At intervals we had flag days to collect money for arms. We did this mostly outside the churches.

In 1919 Miss Kennedy was promoted Commandant of the whole Cumann na mBan organisation and I was made Captain of our Branch. I had to arrange the allocation of girls to the different First Aid Stations during the ambushing period. My principal one was in South Frederick Street. A number of girls in turn would take up their position there, bringing their first-aid equipment and any men wounded in an ambush in those areas would be brought to those centres and their wounds dressed, after which they would be brought to some safe place, sometimes to a hospital, chiefly the Mater. The I.R.A. would notify me before an action took place so as to ensure that some girls would be present at those recognised stations when required. As far as I am aware none of those houses was ever found out and no raids were ever made on them. The I.R.A. procured those houses and may have used them for other purposes. In all this work I co-operated with Commandant Joe O'Connor and Seán Guilfoyle.

Cumann na mBan marched in the procession through Dublin on the occasion of Terence McSweeney's death. His remains were not allowed to come to Dublin. We were also mobilised for duty outside Mountjoy on the morning of Kevin Barry's execution. We knelt on the street and

remained there although the British military brought up their tanks quite close to us.

I was a member of the District Council of Cumann na mBan which used to meet on Sunday mornings at 25 Parnell Square. I can't remember what year or during what period. In that capacity I was a member of a court-martial of one of the members who was charged with associating with an Australian soldier serving with the British Army. It emerged during the trial that the soldier in question was a relative of hers and on that account no further action was taken.

Apart from routine Cumann na mBan activities I cannot recall being engaged in any other incident of importance up to the time of the Truce. We continued our usual Branch activities during the period of the Truce. We were all awaiting anxiously the result of the negotiations in London and when the Treaty was signed we attended the debates that took place ^{outside} in University College. I attended as a delegate at the Convention Extraordinary of Cumann na mBan that took place at the Mansion House in February 1922 and supported the resolution against acceptance of the Treaty.

During the fight at the Four Courts which was quite close to where I lived, I went round to the gate to ask the garrison if I could give any help. They said no. Although I succeeded in getting out on that occasion it was for the last time until the surrender. When I saw the garrison coming out I rushed out and got in to the midst of them and gave them refreshments as I knew most of them. There was a friend with me and we gave them whatever we could procure - minerals, etc. They gave us a number of

letters and messages. We spent most of the night delivering them. Fr. Dominic appeared from somewhere and was encouraging and comforting them. He was arrested later on that evening by the Free State soldiers and brought to the Ormond Hotel although he wore the Red Cross. As he was brought past my door I went to speak to him. He said, "I'll be all right". I think they let him go shortly afterwards. I also saw Dr. J. Ryan accompanied away by Free State troops.

The next day - probably the 1st July - I got orders from Miss Kennedy to go to the United Services Club, where the I.R.A. were in possession under the command of Noel Lemass. I stayed there that night, cooking for the men. There was heavy firing from the direction of Cuffe Street but there were no casualties among our men. I think this post was evacuated on the Sunday and we - about seven or eight of us - were sent home.

After that we were looking after the prisoners in Mountjoy and collecting money for their dependants. This went on during 1923 and even after the cease-fire.

SIGNED

Rose McLumara

DATE

February 27th 1951

WITNESS

Martha Keegan
J. M. Larkin

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURÓ STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21
NO. W.S. 482

A P P E N D I X A

Inghinidhe Branch of Cumann na mBan

Prior to Easter Week, 1916.

Constance De Markieveice
Maud Gonne McBride
Rose McNamara
G. Milner (deceased)
Ann Devlin
Nellie Gifford
Sarah Keeley
Kathleen Mullen
Marcella Cosgrove
Sheila Meagher
Annie Cooney (Mrs. O'Brien)
Lily Cooney
Eileen Cooney (Mrs. Harbourne)
May Byrne (Mrs. Doyle), 6 Coolevin Road,
Lower Clanbrassil Street.
Katie Byrne (deceased)
Bridget Hegarty (Mrs. Harmon)
Josie Kelly (Mrs. Greene)
Katie Kelly (Mrs. O'Regan)
Emily O'Keefe (Mrs. Hendley)
Josie O'Keefe (Mrs. McNamara)
Rose Mullally (Mrs. Farrelly)
Agnes McNamee (deceased)
Margaret L. Kennedy
Josie McGowan (deceased)
Margaret O'Flaherty (Mrs. Timmons)
Sheila O'Hanlon (Mrs. G. Lynch)
Molly O'Hanlon
Josephine Spicer (deceased)

Priscilla Quigley (Mrs. Kavanagh)
 Maria Quigley (Mrs. Clince)
 Winnie Byrne (Mrs. Sommerville)
 Peg Cuddihy (Mrs. Traynor)
 Bridie Kenny
 Nellie Cuddihy (Mrs. Fitzgerald)
 Lavina Doyle
 M. Lalor (Mrs. Guilfoyle)
 Eily Walsh (Mrs. Murphy)
 Julia Fitzgerald
 Celia Fitzgerald (Mrs. McMahon)
 Kitty Geraghty (Mrs. Fitzgerald)
 E. Geraghty
 Joe Walsh (Mrs. Rafferty)
 Annie Hampton
 Julia Grennan
 E. O'Farrell
 Bridget Carey
 Miss Magee
 Miss Ryan
 K. Corcoran (Mrs. McGrath)
 Miss J. Donoghue (Mrs. Brennan)
 B. Masterson (deceased)
 Mrs. Holohan
 Kathleen McGrath
 Kathleen O'Connor
 Margaret O'Kennedy
 Bridie Mahon

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
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A P P E N D I X B.

Active Service in Jameson's Distillery
Marrowbone Lane.

Vice Commandant : Miss R. McNamara O/C. in charge.
Quartermaster : Miss Marcella Cosgrove
Section Com. : May Byrne (Mrs. Doyle)

Josie Kelly (Mrs. Greene),
166 Lower Kimmage Road.

Katie Kelly (Mrs. O'Regan)

Josie O'Keefe (Mrs. McNamara)

Emily O'Keefe (Mrs. Hendley)

Bridget Hegarty (Mrs. Harmon),
Raphoe Road, Crumlin.

Margaret O'Flaherty (Mrs. Timmons),
183 Crumlin Road.

Katie Byrne (deceased)

Margaret L. Kennedy

Rose Mullally (Mrs. Farrelly)

Josie McGowan (deceased)

Sheila O'Hanlon (Mrs. G. Lynch)

Maria Quigley (Mrs. J. Clince)

Priscilla Quigley (Mrs. Kavanagh)

Josephine Spicer (deceased)

Miss B. Masterson (deceased)

Winnie Byrne (Mrs. Sommerville)

Molly O'Hanlon

Annie Cooney (Mrs. O'Brien)

Eileen Cooney (Mrs. Harbourne)

Lily Cooney

Bridie Kenny

Agnes McNamee (deceased)

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Active Service in other Centres.

Adjutant: Joe Walsh (Mrs. Rafferty) - G. P. O.
 Sheila (Julia) Grennan - G. P. O.
 E. O'Farrel - G. P. O.

Commandant: E. Walsh (Mrs. Murphy) - Church
 Street.
 Peg Cuddihy (Mrs. Traynor) - Street Duty.
 Nellie Gifford (Mrs. Donnelly) -
 Stephen's Green Area.
 Lily G. O'Brennan (Central Branch).

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