

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21

NO. W.S. 706

ROINN



COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 706.....

Witness

Jeremiah O'Carroll,  
Main St.,  
Carrigtwohill,  
Co. Cork.

Identity.

O/C. 'F' Company 3rd Battalion, 1st Cork Brigade,  
1919 - ;

Company Quartermaster Sergeant National Army  
at date of statement.

Subject.

National and military activities  
South-West Cork, 1915-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. ...S. 2006.....

Form B.S.M. 2

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 706

STATEMENT BY JEREMIAH CARROLL, MAIN STREET,  
CARRIGTWOHILL, CO. CORK, AND COLLINS BARRACKS,  
CORK, FORMERLY OF CLOUGHDUV, CROOKSTOWN, CO. CORK,  
'F' COMPANY, 3RD BATTALION, CORK I BRIGADE.

23RD APRIL, 1952.

A Section of the Irish Volunteers, later known as the I.R.A., was first formed in the Farnanes area in October, 1915.

It was formed by one Bill Connor, then a man of 45 years, on Terence McSweeney's instructions, who was organising the area.

Some thirty men took the oath up to Easter, 1916. Myself (Jeremiah Carroll) and Denis Carroll, Cornelius and Patrick O'Keefe, P. O'Sullivan, Cloughduv, the O'Mahonys, O'Connors and McSweeneys, etc., of Farnanes. To the best of my recollection the oath was in the following form: 'I, ....., will bear true faith and allegiance to the Government when established and will defend it against all enemies whether foreign or domestic.' After all these years I am not quite certain of the words of the oath, particularly that part referring to the Government, but I am positive that we did take an oath.

The first Parade in public was the Manchester Martyrs' Celebrations in Cork City in 1915.

All available arms to the number of about six shot-guns were carried. These had been collected from the local owners; there was also a number of Croppy Pikes (about twenty) which were made by the local Blacksmith.

Drilling was carried out in public at this time and all meetings were held in Bill Connor's house where each man took the oath, as mentioned above.

Patrick O'Keefe and myself (Jeremiah Carroll) were appointed with Bill Connor at a meeting which was held in the Volunteer Hall, Sheares Street, in Cork a fortnight before Easter Sunday, 1916.

There was a large attendance; Terence McSweeney, the Hales of Ballinadee, Charlie Browne and the two O'Connors of Macroom were among some of the important people who were present.

It was impressed on all those present to get all men equipped as quickly as possible and to have a Parade arranged for Easter Sunday.

Only four men of the Section, with Bill Connor from Farnanes, turned out on Easter Sunday - Cornelius and Patrick O'Keefe, myself (Jeremiah) and Denis Carroll. The Cork City contingent arriving at Crookstown Station by train, where the Section joined up with them. Why only four of our Section turned out I cannot remember, except maybe that they were lackadaisical, or maybe it was some other reason that nobody would care to remember now.

We all then proceeded to Crookstown village where we linked up with contingents from Kinsale, Bandon and Ballinadee. We then proceeded to Macroom. A halt was made in Macroom where word was brought by a man on a motor cycle that the landing of the arms in Kerry was not successful. It was only then we learned of the real meaning of our march.

The evening came wet; we were told to disperse and return to our districts.

The Bandon and Ballinadee Units remained in Crookstown overnight; the Cork City Units returned by train.

Some days after Easter Bill Connor handed over what Croppy Pikes we had to the local R.I.C. (less handles) on threat of being arrested.

The four of us who took part in that Parade were to be arrested but the local Clergy interceded; the arrests did not take place.

The organisation still existed but did not become really active until after 1918, but was kept going by means of ceillidhe and Irish Classes.

Then a Sinn Féin Club was formed in the Parish which was taken in by the Macroom area. It was comprised mostly of Volunteers. By this time we were carrying out weekly drills. This was in 1918.

In March, 1918, on the threat of conscription both the Club and Volunteer Section became 100% active.

A collection in aid of the fight against conscription was made at the Church gates; the collectors appointed were myself (Jeremiah Carroll), Jeremiah O'Leary, David Healy, James Foley.

If arrested we were not to recognise the British Courts. The four of us were arrested at midnight, the end of July, tried at Ballincollig and sentenced to one month in Cork Jail. This was for carrying out the collection. We spent three weeks of this period in solitary confinement.

On release we organised the Volunteers for active service.

We each worked a different part of our area and acted as drill instructors and lecturers to the best of our ability, calling parades for two nights each week of the local Volunteers.

Following on the re-organisation already mentioned the areas were divided into Battalion areas in 1919. The Farnanes Company became 'F' Company, 3rd Battalion, 1st Cork Brigade.

With a strength of 70 (seventy), Officers, N.C.Os. and men, with very little arms, a few shot-guns, we later got a few revolvers and one rifle.

On the evacuation of the R.I.C. Barracks at Farnanes it was destroyed. This was, I think, in 1919 and the building was partially destroyed by burning, the night after the evacuation.

The Company were on active service from 1919 to July, 1921, principally on the blocking and trenching of roads.

They were out in full strength the night Carrigrohid R.I.C. Barracks was attacked, the Company blocking all roads leading to it from the area to impede enemy movements from Cork. It was the Macroom Battalion dealt with the actual attack. We in the Ovens Battalion acted as covering parties and did the road blocking.

A number of the Company took part in the Viaduct ambush about four or five miles to the South-west of Cork City. All were anxious to do their part but lack of arms prevented this. Forty-five to fifty men drawn from the whole Battalion took part.

Two enemy lorries with Tans used pass along the road near the Viaduct about 11 o'clock every morning and it was decided to attack them. When in the position the first time no lorries came but on the second occasion the job was attempted. The men

drawn from the whole Battalion who took part were all armed, and while some acted as scouts and covering parties, about thirty actually were detailed for the attack. However, it did not come off, for enemy troops, apparently informed of our movements, surrounded the whole area where we were and we had to abandon our position and get out through the ring. We headed in small groups in the direction of Ballincollig Barracks as being the way the enemy would never suspect us of going and we did get through the cordon without firing a single shot. One of our Scouts, O'Herlihy, was wounded and taken prisoner and died subsequently in a hospital in Cork.

The area was used by the Brigade Officers for resting.

There was an old empty house in the Company area near Farnanes where prisoners were guarded from time to time at great risk of us being captured. These were prisoners taken by our own Battalion and they were held there while awaiting Court-martial.

At no time was the area without men being detailed to watch for enemy movements. We had scouts posted to watch for any suspicious movements which might indicate raids by the enemy and to give warning which was passed on to put us all on the alert.

I was twice held up by the Black and Tans making enquiries about me; each time I got away.

Once I was held up on the return journey from Kilmurray where I went to locate the Brigade O.C., Seán Hegarty, after he escaped from a raid with others from the Gurrarugh area.

The Tans were out searching for petrol which had been removed from the railroad station at Crookstown that morning;

it was for Macroom. It was the Macroom Battalion which had seized the petrol.

One night in August, 1920, the Company turned out to destroy Crookstown House and Ryecourt, two large houses in the area which were to be taken over as enemy posts on information received that the houses had been inspected by them.

The area was so well blocked by trees and by the trenching of roads the enemy could only move on foot or bicycle except on the main Cork-Macroom road.

From 1918 to July, 1921, I was practically "on the run" as they had my name and were always making enquiries looking for me.

On the night of the 2nd July, 1921, I was at home with the brother when the house was raided at 11.30. I escaped but the brother was arrested. They were looking for me. The brother was detained until released in December, 1921.

It was a shock for the mother that night which she never recovered from, which caused her early death.

The Unit was very active up to the 11th July, 1921, the date of the Truce.

I was not a member of the I.R.B. or was never approached to join it. As far as I know, Bill Connor, who first organised the Volunteers in our area was the only member of the I.R.B. there.

Signed 57076 *Jeremiah Carroll*  
(Jeremiah Carroll)

Witnessed *C. Saurin* LT.-COLONEL.  
(C. Saurin)

Date 7th July 1952

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21
No. W.S. 006