

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURD STAIRS MILITARY 1913 21

No. W.S. 1256

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1,256

Witness

Patrick Ronan,
Ferns,
Co. Wexford.

Identity.

Adjutant, 3rd Battalion,
North Wexford Brigade.

Subject.

Formation of Ferns Company
Irish Volunteers, 1914.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No S.1347

Form B S M 2

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THIRD STATEMENT BY MR. PATRICK RONAN,

Ferns, Co. Wexford.

My attention has been drawn to a report which appeared in a paper called "The Record" which was published for a short time in Gorey by a man calling himself Brennan-Whitmore & Co. The report is in connection with the Ferns Coy. Irish Volunteers and was published in the above paper on 7th June, 1947. It stated that the Ferns Coy. was one of the first to be formed in the county and was formed by Mr. W.J. Brennan-Whitmore. This is not in accordance with the facts. The facts are that there was a circle of the I.R.B. containing over 30 members in Ferns for some years prior to the formation of the Volunteers, and when the latter organisation came into existence the I.R.B. was ordered to form a Coy. and get control of it. I think this was general at the time all over the country in any area where the I.R.B. existed. At a meeting of the I.R.B. here the Centre, Thomas Roche, told us of this order and it was decided to form a company. The question then arose of somebody with military knowledge to train the company. There was a local ex-British soldier named Whitmore and it was decided to call on him and ask him to become drill instructor. He was waited on and agreed. The I.R.B. then called a meeting and got what supporters they could to attend. Whitmore was also at this meeting, and thus the Ferns Company was born.

Some time later there was an election ^{OF} officers. It had been ordered by the I.R.B. that they should command the organisation and have all the officers I.R.B. men,

but a difficulty arose in this case of Ferns as none of the I.R.B. members had any knowledge of drill and it was felt that Whitmore, being a very vain type of man, would not remain as a drill instructor only, so it was decided for the sake of training that he would be elected O/C but the other two officers and the non-commissioned officers would be I.R.B. men, so Whitmore, though not an I.R.B. man, was elected O/C. The other two officers and five non-commissioned officers were I.R.B. men, so the I.R.B. men were sufficiently strong to vote the destinies of the company.

The remainder of the article concerning the Ferns Company referred to in "The Record" is correct.

I may mention that the ex-British soldier named Whitmore and the writer of the article in "The Record" who claimed that Ferns Company was formed by Mr. W.J. Brennan-Whitmore and the printer and publisher of "The Record" - Brennan-Whitmore & Co. - were all one and the same man.

Signed: P. Ronan

P. Ronan

Date: 19/9/55

19.9.55

Witness: Sean Brennan Lieut. Col.

(Investigator)

(Sean Brennan) Lieut. Col.

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