

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1013-21

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 14



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BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

(Bureau of Military History 1913-21),

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BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH.
(Dublin).

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Statement by

Thomas J. Golden,
Gurrane,
Donoughmore,
Co. Cork.

Dated 15 September, 1947,

On Courtbrack Coy., I.V.,
Co. Cork.

1913 - 1916.

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STATEMENT OF THOMAS J. GOLDEN, GURRANE,
DONOUGHMORE, CO. CORK.

PERIOD: 1913 to Easter 1916.

UNIT: COURTBRACK COMPANY, I.V.

In December, 1913, a Company of Volunteers was started in the Courtbrack Chapel area. That area covered portions of the parishes of Blarney, Donoughmore and Inniscarra. The majority of the members of the Company and those in control of it were Redmondite supporters and those of us in the area who were not Irish Party followers did not join at first, though some efforts were made to induce us to come in. About May, 1914, a number of us joined the Company in response to an appeal for recruits.

On the same day that we joined there was an election of Officers, Father Shinnick was elected President, P.M. Walsh, Chairman, and Denis Downes, Secretary. I was elected Assistant Secretary. P.M. Walsh was an ex-Australian policeman who knew a little drill. There were no other Officers. There were about 60 men in the Company at the time and they had some Garabaldi rifles but no ammunition for them. Father Shinnick came over to us after 1916.

The split in the Company took place in September, 1914. Of those present that day 30 voted for Redmond's control and nine against. There is a report of the speeches made at the meeting in the "Cork Examiner". The nine of us withdrew and the Redmondites carried on for some time but had faded out before Easter, 1916; as an effective organisation.

We started a Company of the Irish Volunteers in November, 1914, and our strength increased steadily. We started with about twelve men; in December we had about twenty-five, and in December, 1915, we had forty.

Two parades a week were held regularly from the start up to Easter, 1916, and in addition there were route marches and exercises on Sundays. The week-night parades were usually held at Courtbrack. The average attendance at these in 1915 was thirty. In addition to their training value, the Sunday marches had as an objective recruiting for the Volunteers in the surrounding districts. Marches took place to Donoughmore - 4 miles, Mourne Abbey - 10 miles, Mallow - 14 miles, Blarney - 5 miles and Waterloo - 5 miles. Sometimes we combined with the Cork City Companies in Sunday exercises, such as the manoeuvres at Waterloo in the Summer of 1915; J.J. O'Connell of Dublin took charge of the Courtbrack Company that day, and Sean O'Sullivan was in charge of the Cork City men. We had about 12 men in a rifle competition at Carrigtwohill in 1915. We had our own .22, but got knocked out in the competition by not being allowed to fire it. We had to fire a converted Garabaldi.

Courtbrack Company was the first to be formed in this

area, and the Brigade O.C. - Tomás MacCurtain - used the Company extensively in organising the neighbouring areas. A cycle section from the Company and a cycle section from Cork City went with him to Mallow in April, 1915. There was some dispute in the Mallow Company at the time. A County Board, consisting of the Cork Committee and representatives of the County Units, existed up to the end of 1915, but when the Battalions were formed about that time the normal military organisation replaced it.

Courtbrack Company took part in the St. Patrick's Day and Manchester Martyrs' parades in Cork in 1915, and in the St. Patrick's Day Parade in 1916. The 1915 St. Patrick's Day Parade brought us some recruits. Four or five men from the Company took part in the O'Donovan Rossa funeral in Dublin, fully armed. Men from the Company also took part in the parade in Limerick on Whit Sunday, 1915.

Church door collections were held throughout the area for the Arms Fund and the men paid 3d per man per week into a Company Fund for the purchase of equipment. The equipment consisted of haversacks, belts, bandoliers, waterbottles, puttees and hats. This Company had Australian type green hats turned up at one side, though peaked caps were more usual in other Companies. There were about three full uniforms in the Company of which I had one. By Easter, 1916, every man in the Company was fully equipped.

In July, 1915, we got twelve Mauser rifles and 200 rounds of ammunition for them from the Brigade. These were purchased from Company Funds.

* At Easter, 1916, we had the following arms in the Company :-

Twelve Mauser rifles with bayonets and 200 rounds;
one .22 rifle and a fair supply of ammunition;
twelve shot-guns with a plentiful supply of ordinary
cartridges. None had been slug loaded;
five .22 revolvers with a good supply of ammunition;
one .32 revolver and 6 rounds;
twenty pikes (eight finished) made locally with
9 ft. handles.

There was no change of Officers from the formation of the Company up to Easter, 1916. The Officers were :-

Captain Thomas J. Golden.
Instructor James Golden, an ex-British
Army man.

There were no other Officers.

The orders for the exercises on Easter Sunday, 1916, had been issued about a fortnight beforehand. The Brigade O.C. - Tomás MacCurtain - sent for me and I saw him at the Hall in Sheares Street, Cork, on Good Friday. He told me that a landing of arms was expected on the Kerry coast. My Company was to parade at Bweeing Cross, 6 miles away, on Easter Sunday with all arms and equipment and rations for two days. I am not sure now of what the time fixed for the parade was, but it was in the evening - it may have been

4 o'clock. He said the men would be out for the night and should bring blankets or heavy coats. He gave me definite orders not to tell anyone that this was anything more than an ordinary two-day exercise. Any announcement that was to be made he would make himself when he arrived at Bweeing. If he did not come, some member of his staff would come. Bweeing was only a stage on our journey but we were to wait there for further orders. He did not say anything about a Rising and I understood the purpose of the mobilisation to be the getting of arms. He said that we may have to defend the rifles with our lives. Early in 1916 I had been sworn in as a member of the I.R.B. by Pa Twomey, Kilmona, but I had no information, other than that given me that day by MacCurtain, as to what action was proposed to be taken on Easter Sunday. I was the only I.R.B. man in the Company.

Later that night, Good Friday, the orders for Sunday were confirmed by the Battalion, O.C., Pa Twomey, but the time was changed to two o'clock at Bweeing Cross.

The whole Company was mobilised in accordance with the orders received for Easter Sunday, and all paraded with the exception of a few who were unable to turn out. The following members of the Company paraded (38) :-

Thomas J. Golden (Capt.),	Gurrane, Donoughmore.
Batt. Golden,	" "
Patrick O'Connell,	" "
John O'Connell,	" "
Michael Healy,	" "
Daniel Healy,	" "
William Buckley,	J' "
Patrick O'Callaghan,	" "
David O'Callaghan,	" "(on duty as Brigade driver)
Michael O'Connell,	" "(Despatch Rider)
Jeremiah Buckley,	Pluckanes, "
Owen McCarthy,	Firmount, "
Denis McCarthy,	" "
Jeremiah McCarthy,	" "
Michael Murray,	Courtbrack, Blarney.
Denis Downey,	" "
William Downey,	" "
Jeremiah Downey,	" "
Denis Kelleher,	" "
James Golden,	Garryadeen, Grenagh.
Michael Sullivan,	Courtbrack, Blarney.
Batt. D. Kelleher,	" "
Con. Kelleher,	" "
Jeremiah Kelleher,	" "
Patrick O'Keefe,	" "
William Lucy,	32, Dublin St. Blackpool, Cork
Patrick Madden,	Dawstown, Blarney.
Michael Ward,	Loughane, "
Maurice Walsh,	" "
John Scott,	" "
Timothy Forde,	" "
Patrick Forde,	" "
John Sexton,	" "
John O'Sullivan,	Tower, St. Anne's Hill.
Richard O'Sullivan,	" " " "
John Murphy,	" " " "

Patrick Buckley,
John Daly.

Vicarstown.
Victoria Cross, Cork.

In addition to these the following men from Waterloo Company paraded with us :-

John Reilly, Garrycloyne.
Denis Reilly, "
Denis Kiely, Ballygibbon.
Eugene Kiely, "
Tom Murphy, Ballinareha,
Jack McAuliffe, Blarney.
John Horgan, Shamrock Terrace, Blarney.
Andrew O'Keefe, Shamrock Tce., Blarney.

We paraded at Gurrane and marched to Ahadillane, where we met the Kilmona, Whitechurch, Waterloo and Mourne Abbey Companies. The whole party marched to Bweeing Cross. The Donoughmore Company marched directly to Bweeing Cross. Shortly after our arrival Michael Lynch came there on a motor cycle. I do not know if he had any particular business there; he did not bring any message that I know of. The Mallow Company also arrived at Bweeing Cross. Two detectives from Mallow and an R.I.C. man from Dromahane were there - they were there before we arrived and it looked as if they knew the parade was to be held there.

A guard from Courtbrack Company was put on the rifles and other arms and the men were given a fall out for refreshments. We expected the early arrival of the Brigade O.C. The day was cold and when he did not arrive a consultation was held amongst the Officers and it was decided to occupy the men with some exercises. An exercise was carried out on a mountain about half a mile from Bweeing Cross. This had concluded and we were back at the Cross and formed up again before Tomas MacCurtain arrived. It may have been 5 o'clock when he came. There was no one with him except the driver of the car, David O'Callaghan, and one of the Hales of Ballinadee.

Tomas MacCurtain appeared to be in a great hurry. He addressed the whole parade and said that the exercises were cancelled. The men were to return quietly to their homes and keep their arms safely. They may soon be wanted again, he said, and may be called upon in the near future. We were to remain alert and stand to arms until further orders. He left before we did and went in the direction of Cork. I do not know what his subsequent movements were that day.

We marched back to our own areas. The evening got very wet and everybody was soaked. The order to stand to arms was issued to the Company on Sunday night and we stood to during the week. We were very disappointed, but were hoping that we may be called out again. We did not hear of the loss of the arms ship for three or four days afterwards.

David O'Callaghan brought an order from the Brigade on Tuesday night, April 25th, to dump arms. All arms and ammunition were carefully dumped and none were captured in the subsequent raids. The following houses were raided by military and R.I.C.:-

Thomas J. Golden's, Gurrane, Donoughmore.

Michael Murray's, Courtbrack, Blarney.

Owen and Denis McCarthy's, Firmount, Donoughmore.

The R.I.C. left orders at these houses that the arms were to be handed in to them, but no weapon was surrendered in Courtbrack Company area. The house of James Golden, Garryadean, Grenagh, was raided during his absence, and windows broken to effect an entrance. He lived alone.

There was no Fianna organisation in the Company Area up to Easter, 1916.

SIGNED: Thomas J. Golden (Capt)

DATE: September 15th 1947.

WITNESS: Flavence O'Donoghue.

