

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 63



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Telefón 61018.

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BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

(Bureau of Military History 1913-21),

26 RAEDH NA NIARTHARACH,
(26 Westland Row),

BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH.
(Dublin).

DOCUMENT W.S. 63.

Joint Statement by

A. Michael O'Sullivan, Castletownroche,
B. Sean Butler do.
C. David O'Callaghan do.

Co. Cork.

Dated: 17th November, 1947.

On: Castletownroche Coy. I.V.
1914-1916.

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ORIGINAL

W. 5. 63.

JOINT STATEMENT OF MICHAEL O'SULLIVAN,
LOUGHARUANE, CASTLETOWNROCHE, SEAN BUTLER,
MAIN STREET, CASTLETOWNROCHE, AND DAVID
O'CALLAGHAN, THE HILL, CASTLETOWNROCHE,
CO. CORK.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
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PERIOD: Early 1914 to May 1916.

No. W.S. 63

UNIT: Castletownroche Company I.V.

A Company of Volunteers was started in Castletownroche early in 1914. It came into existence spontaneously but it was not well organised. There was no Committee in charge and no Officers. Members varied from twenty to thirty at one parade to eighty or ninety at another. The Company was drilled by two ex-soldiers - Tom Sullivan and _____ Jones. Marching and close order drill was the usual training.

Some time before the review of the Volunteers at Mitchelstown on 4th July, 1914, Captain Talbot Crosbie and J.J. Walsh visited the Company and spoke to the men. In his speech Captain Talbot Crosbie referred to the Curragh mutiny and said the Volunteers should be prepared to defend the country themselves. A few of us went to Mitchelstown to see the review, but the Company did not parade there. There were no arms in the Company at this time, but a number of the men owned shot guns. Political opinion in the district was about equally divided between Redmond and O'Brien. Supporters of both parties were about equally represented in the Company. Sullivan and Jones, who were reservists, were called up about August 1914, and that finished the Company.

Towards the end of the year a start was made to organise a Company of Irish Volunteers by Denis Hannigan who was then employed as a gardener by Mrs. Coughlan, The Close. We had about sixteen or eighteen members at the start. Denis Hannigan was Captain and Dan Shinnick was Secretary. As far as we can remember there were no other Officers. Meetings were held in the Hall in Chapel Street. Training in drill and signalling was given there. We had direct contact with Dublin at that time; Shinnick was in touch with Balmer Hobson.

During 1915 training was continued under Denis Hannigan. Parades were held every Tuesday night and on Sundays. On some of the Sunday parades we marched to neighbouring places in an effort to recruit for the Volunteers. We were in Kildorrery on a snowy Sunday in February; not a man joined there. We were in Shanballymore on another Sunday. On one of the night parades we went to Killavullen where we met Tomás MacCurtain. Numbers still remained around sixteen or eighteen. We had no arms except the shot guns owned by the men and a Lee Enfield rifle which we had on loan from the National Volunteers in another district.

The men paid 2d. a week into a Company Fund for the purchase of equipment. By March 1916 we all had belts, bandoliers, haversacks, puttees and green wide-brimmed hats turned up at one side. There were no uniforms in the Company. Sixteen or eighteen men from the Company attended the St. Patrick's Day parade in Cork in 1916. The majority of them were armed with shot guns.

Denis Hannigan left the district about a week before Easter 1916, and James O'Neill was elected Captain in his stead. Dan Shinnick continued as Secretary or Adjutant. Both are now dead.

On the Monday before Easter Sunday, 1916, Fred Murray came from Cork with the mobilisation orders for Easter Sunday. These were issued to the Company on parade on Tuesday night and were to the effect that we would assemble at the Railway Station, Castletownroche, at 10 a.m. on Easter Sunday with all arms, ammunition, full equipment and three days' rations, proceed to Mallow by train and march from there to Beeing Cross. We had no definite information that this was anything more than an ordinary parade and exercise.

The following assembled at Castletownroche Railway Station and went to Beeing:-

James O'Neill
Seán Butler
David O'Callaghan
John O'Sullivan (The Close)
James Palmer
Thomas Palmer
Tim Bulman
Eugene O'Neill
Maurice O'Brien

The arms which we had were:-

Four or five shot guns.
One .45 Bulldog revolver with 5 rounds.
One .45 Webley revolver with 7 or 8 rounds.

We had no ammunition for the shot guns, but ammunition was issued to us in Beeing. There were about a dozen pikes in the Company, but they were not taken out that day. They had been made by David Roche, blacksmith, Castletownroche. The Lee Enfield rifle had gone back to Castlelyons before Easter.

We went in to Mallow by train, marched to O'Donovan's Hall in Fair Street, next door to the R.I.C. Barracks, where we met the Mallow men and marched with them via Mourne Abbey to Beeing. We met the Mourne Abbey Company on the way. Two detectives from Mallow, Fallon and Dwyer, followed us on a motor cycle and side car. We had two bicycles with us but everybody marched.

As well as Mourne Abbey, Mallow and ourselves, Companies from Kilmona, Whitechurch and Donoughmore also assembled at Beeing. Michéal Lynch arrived there on a motor cycle and side car soon after us, and exercises were carried out on a hill nearby. Late in the day, perhaps between four and five o'clock, Tomás MacCurtain and Terence MacSwiney came in a motor car. One of the Hales was with them. Tomás MacCurtain spoke to the whole crowd, standing on a fence at the side of the road. There were a number of local people present as well as the Volunteers. He said that the enemy not having stopped our parade that day showed that he was afraid. There would be another day and men should be better prepared. He commented that many had no overcoats. We were to return to our own areas, keep alert and await further orders. It was beginning to rain when the parade dismissed. The car with the Brigade Officers left, but we do not know what direction it took.

James O'Neill, David O'Callaghan, John O'Sullivan and Seán Butler stayed with Mourne Abbey Company. The remainder of Castletownroche Company marched home direct. Some of the Mourne Abbey Company with the four Castletownroche men stopped at Ahadillane for refreshments. Everybody was by then thoroughly saturated by the heavy rain. Faces were coloured green where the dye from the hats had run on to them. Nevertheless, they were in good spirits and national songs were sung. An old Fenian at

Ahadillane was inclined to be critical of the efforts of a younger generation. He held that the weather was always on the side of England. Seán Butler cycled home from there, arriving in Castletownroche about 3 a.m. Jim O'Neill, John O'Sullivan and David O'Callaghan went with _____ Mahony, Burnfort, to his home where they got a meal. David O'Callaghan, who had the second bicycle, cycled home from there. O'Neill and O'Sullivan stayed the night somewhere in that neighbourhood.

There were no newspapers on Monday. No orders came to the Company from anywhere during Easter week. There were no arrests in the Company area and no arms were surrendered or lost.

There were no I.R.B., Fianna or Cumann na mBan organisations in the Company area at Easter 1916.

Seán Butler attended a meeting in the City Hall, Cork, in 1917, at which the actions of the Brigade Officers at Easter 1916 were criticised by the representatives of some Units. Some were sorry they did not get orders to fight, but all parted on good terms. Terence MacSwiney said that day, "we are all young men yet, there is plenty of time to fight."

SIGNED:

Michael O'Sullivan

David O'Callaghan

Seán Butler

DATE:

November 17th 1947.

WITNESS:

Florence Donoghue.

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(Bureau of Military History
(1913-1921))

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Loughavane
Castletownroche
New Year's Day 1918

A Copy,

There is still another name which we want included in that list previously given to you (The mobilisation of the C. In. Roche Coy. I.V. at Beeing on Easter Sunday 1916) and that name is Daniel Skinnick afterwards killed in action at Glenacurrane M. T. C. Co. Town

When you are sending his name on to the Bureau will you please see to it - that his name be placed first on the list, he being the only man formerly of the C. In. Roche Coy. to be killed in action against Free State troops.

With best wishes
for a happy New Year
Signed

Michael O'Sullivan
James Palmer
Sean Butler.

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