

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 103

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COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S.103.....

Witness

Sean O'Hegarty
Sean Lynch
Tadhg Twomey
Jeremiah O'Shea

Identity

} Joint statement

Members of Ballingearry Coy. I.V.

Subject

Ballingearry Coy. I.V. - 1914-1916

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

File No. S/436; S/606; S/607; S/608

Form B.S.M. 2.

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRS MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 103

JOINT STATEMENT OF SEÁN O'HEGARTY, 1, ROCKLAWN
TERRACE, DOUGLAS ROAD, CORK.
SEÁN LYNCH, DERRAGH, REANOREE, MACROOM.
TADG TWOMEY, BALLINGEARY, and
JEREMIAH O'SHEA, BALLINGEARY, CO. CORK.

PERIOD: AUGUST, 1914 TO MAY, 1916.

UNIT: BALLINGEARY COMPANY, I.V.

In August, 1914, Pierce Beazley started a Company of Volunteers in Ballingeary. It grew rapidly to a strength of about 100 men. John Shorten was the first Captain of the Company, but went to Cork after having been a short time in the position and was replaced by Eugene Moynihan.

The Company was only a month or two in existence when the Split in the organisation generally took place. A full meeting of the Company was held in the Irish College to decide what action would be taken. Father O'Callaghan (afterwards shot by Black and Tans in Liam de Róiste's house in Cork) was present at the meeting and spoke in favour of control by Redmond, although he had no official position in the Company. Seán O'Hegarty had given a statement to be read at the meeting to P. Ronan, but Ronan did not produce the statement and it was not read. A vote was taken. A minority voted against control by Redmond's nominees and withdrew from the meeting. The Company of National Volunteers formed from the majority lost vitality immediately and never afterwards functioned as an effective organisation. It dissolved completely in a short time. Some of its members subsequently joined the Irish Volunteers.

On a Sunday almost immediately after this meeting Tomás MacCurtain and Terence MacSwiney came to Ballingeary. Eugene Moynihan, Currahy, as Company Captain, had been notified of their intended visit. He did not tell anybody of it, with the result that there was no one to meet them. Pat Higgins, Seán Murphy and Paddy Corkery from Cork were with them that day. All wore uniform. Tadhg Twomey and Seán Lynch met them accidentally, but nothing was done that day.

Very soon afterwards the men who had withdrawn from the Company met and formed a Company of Irish Volunteers. By November, 1914, their strength was about twenty, and that continued to be the strength of the Company up to Easter, 1916. The following Officers were elected :-

Captain:	Seán Lynch.
Adjutant:	Tadhg Twomey.
Treasurer:	Dan Corcoran.

There was no change in these Officers up to Easter, 1916, and there were no other Officers.

In November, 1914, the whole Company cycled to a meeting held in Kilgarvan for the purpose of starting a Volunteer Company there. Terence MacSwiney spoke in Kilgarvan that day. Fred Murray was there also, and a Company was got going. We had no arms on this occasion but we had haversacks and bandoliers which had been the property of the original Company.

Before the end of 1915 the whole Company cycled to Ballyvourney to a meeting held there to recruit Volunteers. Tomás MacCurtain and Terence MacSwiney cycled with us to Ballyvourney and spoke at the meeting. Paud O'Donoghue was there also. It was a terrible day of rain and storm. The only one to join the Volunteers in Ballyvourney that day was Dan Tade Sweeney, who afterwards paraded with the Kilnamartyra Company and went out with them on Easter Sunday, 1916.

The whole Company attended the Manchester Martyrs' Commemoration in Cork in November, 1915, all armed with shot guns. The whole Company also attended the St. Patrick's Day parade in Cork in 1916, similarly armed.

Seán Lynch and Tadhg Twomey attended, each for a week, at the Training Course held in Cork in January, 1916.

We got a single shot, large bore, Snyder rifle from Jeremiah Twohig, School Teacher, with about a dozen rounds of ammunition for it. We had a German Mauser rifle, which Terence MacSwiney got for the Company from the Cork Committee. We had enough shot guns to arm the remainder of the men. Bayonets were made for the shot guns but never put on.

In 1915 and up to Easter, 1916, parades were held on one night each week and every Sunday. The normal training was close order drill, arms drill, extended order drill, target practice with a .22 rifle and route marches. Terence MacSwiney came out to us frequently.

We paid 2d or 3d a week into a Company fund for the purchase of equipment. We got also some discarded equipment of the original Company and a part of that Company's funds. We had haversacks, bandoliers and belts. We bought caps for the St. Patrick's Day parade in Cork in 1916. We had no puttees.

The orders for Easter Sunday, 1916, came to us from Seán O'Hegarty a few days before. They were to the effect that the Company was to parade with all arms and equipment and a week's provisions at Ballingeary after first Mass on Easter Sunday and go to Kealkil to meet the Bantry Company there. This order was based on an instruction given to Seán O'Hegarty by Tomás MacCurtain and Terence MacSwiney when they visited him at Ballingeary on the Sunday before Easter Sunday. They had then informed him that his mission on Easter Sunday was to take charge of the Bantry and Ballingeary Companies at Kealkil, to take Kealkil Police Barracks and afterwards to block and hold the Pass of Keimeneigh. But, when he had assembled the two Companies at Kealkil, he was to take no offensive action until and unless word was sent to him to do so by the Brigade. Peadar O'Hourihan was to bring the word. Seán O'Hegarty was to wait until 4 o'clock for it.

The Company paraded on Saturday night and all were instructed to assemble in Ballingeary after first Mass next day. No one, except Seán O'Hegarty, had any definite information that action was contemplated on Easter Sunday, but all understood that it was a possibility.

The following Officers and men paraded:-

Seán O'Hegarty,	Cork.
Seán Lynch,	Derragh, Reanoree.
Jeremiah O'Sullivan,	Tuirinaneun, Ballingeary.
Dan Leary,	Gortafloilig.
Tadhg Twomey,	Tuirindub.
Liam Twomey,	do
Dan Corcoran,	Ballingeary.
Jeremiah O'Shea,	do
Tim Sweeney,	Inchamore, Keimeneigh.

Jack Sullivan,	Inchabeg, Keimineigh.
Dan Sullivan,	do do
Callaghan O'Callaghan,	Inchamore, do
John Con Cronin,	Carrig Lodge.
John Patrick Cronin,	Bawnatemple East.
John J. Cronin,	Gorteenacoile.

When the Company was assembled in the village, and before it moved off to Kealkil, Peadar O'Hourihan arrived on a motor cycle and sidecar. He brought a written message from Brigade Headquarters to Seán Lynch to the effect that the Company was to go to Kealkil, meet the Bantry Company there and await further orders. A policeman named Bennett came along while Lynch was reading the despatch and did his best to have a look at it.

The arms which the Company had that day were:-

- One long Lee Enfield rifle (Sean O'Hegarty's) and 50 rounds.
- One Mauser rifle with 20 rounds.
- One old Snyder rifle with 12 rounds.
- One .22 rifle with 100 rounds.
- Ten shot guns with about 400 rounds.
- Three .32 revolvers with about 60 rounds.

Míceál Ó Cuill had brought Seán O'Hegarty's rifle out from Cork some time previously, walking from Mullinrue to Tuirindubh. Some of the shot guns were the property of members of the Company and some were on loan from local farmers. None had been purchased. Between 100 and 200 cartridges had been loaded with slug.

Four members of the Company walked to Kealkil; the remainder cycled. The cycling party arrived in Kealkil about one o'clock, and the men on foot a short time before the arrival of the Bantry Company. The Bantry men carried no arms - visibly anyhow. Just after our arrival a policeman from Kealkil went off on a bicycle in the Bantry direction.

Scouts were posted and some exercised carried out. Two men on outpost duty were held up by police who wanted to know if they had licences for their shot guns. No message came up to six o'clock; although Seán O'Hegarty's instructions were to wait until 4 o'clock, he waited until 6 o'clock before dismissing the men.

All the police at Kealkil were at the Cross as we came through the village. They attempted to hold up some men and one Volunteer had been pulled off his bicycle. Seán O'Hegarty came up and asked the Sergeant if he was looking for trouble. The Sergeant said no, and it must have been clear to him from the attitude of the Volunteers that it would be inadvisable for him to provoke it. Seán O'Hegarty told Seán Lynch to take his men off, and the police did not interfere any further. All the men returned to Ballingearry and dispersed to their homes.

On Monday, about 12 or 1 o'clock, Tomás MacCurtain and Terence MacSwiney and Bob Hales came to Tuirindubh in a car from the East. Mary and Annie MacSwiney were staying there at the time. MacCurtain and MacSwiney walked to the house where Seán O'Hegarty was, some distance West of Tuirindubh. There they told him of the order cancelling the Easter exercises which they had received on Sunday. They had no information about the Rising which was then actually beginning in Dublin, and had no doubt but that it had been postponed. In the course of discussing the situation, it was clear that they accepted the message received on Sunday as representing the decision of all parties in Dublin, and their anxiety was to get to Dublin as soon as possible to discover what had gone wrong and to try and get

things going again. They did not give Seán O'Hegarty any instructions. He walked East to Tuirindubh with them, and they left in the car, going towards Ballingearry, about 3 o'clock.

On Monday night late a car in which was Tadhg O'Leary, who worked in Suttons in Cork, and a driver, came to Tuirindubh. O'Leary was looking for MacCurtain and MacSwiney. They were not there. Mary MacSwiney went into Cork on Tuesday and Annie went on Thursday. To each of them Seán O'Hegarty gave a message for the Brigade Officers, asking that instructions be sent to him. He received none. On Thursday or Friday Dan Twomey, who had been in Cork, came out. He had only unofficial information and brought no instructions. On Saturday Seán O'Hegarty sent Pat Sweeney to Cork with a further request for instructions. Sweeney reported back that he could not get near the Volunteer Hall.

Late on Wednesday night, or early on Thursday morning, Tadhg O'Shea came to Dooneens from the South. He sent word by Jack Sheehan to Seán O'Hegarty on Thursday to meet him there. Seán went to Dooneens and met him on Thursday. Tadhg brought a proposal from Tom Hales that the Ballinadee men would join forces with the Macroom and Ballingearry men and attack the R.I.C. post in Macroom. Seán O'Hegarty replied that he did not know the situation and the Brigade Officers in Cork did, and that he was sure they would do what was right.

No orders came to the Company during Easter Week. On the Sunday after Easter Sunday Father O'Callaghan spoke during Mass in condemnation of the Rising. He said the hands of the clock had been put back for a long time by what had happened, and he advised that the arms should be surrendered. Mrs. O'Hegarty got up and walked out of the church.

There were no arrests in the Company area. Most of the members of the Company were on the run for some time afterwards. No arms were surrendered and none captured in raids. In the second week after Easter, Cavalry from Ballincollig raided as far West as Tuirindubh, subsequently retiring to Ballincollig.

An I.R.B. circle of about five members, which had been organised by Seán O'Hegarty, existed in Ballingearry in 1916.

There were no Fianna or Cumann-na-mBhan organisations in the area at that time.

SIGNED:

[Handwritten signature]

Seán Lynch.

Jack Shea

DATE: 16th. February, 1948

WITNESS: Florence O'Donoghue

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