

# ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21  
No. W.S. 138

ROINN  COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 138.....

**Witness**

Timothy O'Riordan  
Maurice Healy  
Jerome Crowley  
Identity } Joint statement

Members of Ballinhassig Coy. I.V. 1915-1916.

**Subject**

Ballinhassig Coy. I.V. 1915-1916

**Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness**

File No. ... S. 780 .....

Form B S M 2

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|------------------------------------|
| BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21 |
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JOINT STATEMENT OF TIMOTHY RIORDAN, BALLINABOY, BALLINHASSIG, CO. CORK.  
 JEROME CROWLEY, " " "  
 MAURICE HEALY, " " "

PERIOD: 1914 TO EASTER, 1916.

UNIT: BALLINHASSIG COMPANY, I.V.

Ballinhassig Company of the Irish Volunteers was started in the Autumn of 1914. There had been a National Volunteer Company in the district before that, but they had ceased to be active and were breaking up when we started. No one who had been in the National Volunteer Company was concerned in the starting of this Company. The Hydes were most active in doing the preliminary work and Paddy Hyde had sounded out a number of local men before a meeting was held.

The first meeting was held at Leary's, Tullig. There were about ten present and it was decided to form the Company. Tim Riordan was elected Captain and no other Officer was appointed. People were not too favourable at first. Numbers increased slowly. At the end of 1914 we had about 20; at the end of 1915 about 50, which included a section at Ballymartle.

During 1915 the Company paraded once a week at Ballinhassig, and on Sunday exercises and route marches were held. We held parades and marches in every village around the district for the purpose of recruiting for the Volunteers, but the response was poor except in Ballymartle, where we got a Section going. Our main strength was in Tullig, Ballinaboy and Knockalucy.

We took part in the St. Patrick's Day and Manchester Martyrs' parades in Cork in 1915 and in the St. Patrick's Day 1916 parade there also. We had about 42 men at these parades. We marched to Cork and back on each occasion. At the end of 1915 we had 3 rifles, a number of shot guns and 12 pikes. John Hales had got the pikes made for us in Bandon. They had 8 ft. handles.

During 1915 and up to Easter, 1916, we had opposition in the district, which, though not open, had the effect of keeping men from joining the Volunteers. ~~The Protestant farmers had their men in such a way that they would not join us, and we were always the objects of a certain amount of ridicule and hostility. Often we were reluctant to go into the local public house for a drink after coming back from a march because of the chaffing we would get. One Sunday when we marched to meet the Ballinacree men at Tarrishannon an ex-soldier there wanted to fight one of our men.~~

*Excluded Not to be printed*

Pat Higgins came out from Cork frequently to us and gave us training instruction. Joss Richardson came also a few times. He had a group of men round Toger, some of which came into this Company, and some of which went to the Lough Company. Michael Hyde was on the training course which was held in Sheares Street, Cork, in January, 1916.

*Excluded Not to be printed*

The Officers at Easter, 1916, were:-

Captain: Tim Riordan.  
Drill Instructor: Michael Hyde.  
Quartermaster: Patrick Hyde.

There were no other officers.

The general order for the parade on Easter Sunday, 1916, was issued some time beforehand. Three or four days before Easter Sunday Pat Higgins came out to a meeting at Hydes. At this meeting there were present only Michael and Patrick Hyde, Pat Higgins and Tim Riordan. Pat Higgins told us that the object of the parade on Easter Sunday was to get arms that were to be landed, and that we were to be ready for anything. We were not to tell anyone else in the Company of this. We were afraid they would not turn out if they knew.

An order was issued for all men to parade at Raheen Cross at 6 o'clock on Easter Sunday morning with all arms and equipment and two days' rations. Some men from outlying districts came on Saturday night and stayed the night at Crowleys, Roches, Hydes and other houses in Ballinaboy. Pat Higgins came out from Cork and stayed the night at Hydes.

The following paraded on Easter Sunday morning at Raheen Cross:-

|                       |                |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| Pat Higgins,          | Cork.          |
| Tim Riordan,          | Ballinaboy.    |
| Jerome Crowley,       | do             |
| Michael Hyde,         | Knockalucy.    |
| Patrick Hyde,         | do             |
| Dan Forbes,           | Ballinaboy.    |
| John Walsh,           | Knockalucy.    |
| Michael Walsh,        | do             |
| Tom Donovan,          | Ballinaboy.    |
| Batt O'Connor,        | do             |
| Mike Collins,         | Kingsland.     |
| Patrick O'Keefe,      | do             |
| Dan Sullivan,         | Ballyheda.     |
| Jerh. Sullivan,       | do             |
| Michael Walsh,        | do             |
| Michael Crowley,      | The Viaduct.   |
| John Murphy,          | Lisfehill.     |
| Dan Coveney,          | Knockalisheen. |
| Dan Lombard,          | Rerour.        |
| Matt. Mulcahy,        | Ballynoe.      |
| Jack Butler,          | Ballinhassig.  |
| David Walsh,          | Riverstick.    |
| Jack Walsh,           | do             |
| Michael Roche,        | do             |
| Jack Roche,           | do             |
| Lawrence Prior,       | do             |
| Dick Reilly,          | do             |
| Jim Crowley,          | Ballinaboy.    |
| John Patrick O'Brien, | Ballyheda.     |

All had caps, belts, haversacks and puttees. Michael Hyde had a full uniform.

We had 3 Service rifles and one Martini, with about \_\_\_\_\_ rounds for the Service rifles and 50 rounds for the Martini. Everyone not having a rifle had a shot gun. We did not bring the pikes as we had enough shot guns to arm everyone. We had about 50 rounds a man for the shot guns. None of it was loaded with slug. We had 3 or 4 .22 revolvers, with about 20 rounds for each. We had no explosives. The shot guns were mostly the property of local farmers.

We took three horses and carts on which we carried food and complete cooking equipment. When Terence MacSwiney met us at Bealnablath he was much impressed by the fact that the men were then having a full dinner which we had just cooked on the roadside. We brought a couple of bicycles for scouting purposes.

We marched to Upton and had 8 o'clock Mass there. Our appearance aroused the interest of the priests there and they commented on our foolishness in going out, poorly armed as we were, against immense and powerful forces. After Mass we went on via Ballinacurra and Straw Hall to Bealnablath. We were the first to arrive there, and were having dinner when Terence MacSwiney arrived in a car. He told us to join the Cork men who were coming and march with them to Macroóm. While we waited for the Cork Companies, the Ballinadee and other Companies passed on towards Kilmurray. When the Cork men came up we joined them and overtook the other Companies at Kilmurray. The whole body then marched to Macroóm.

Tom Donovan told Jerome Crowley on the road to Macroóm that they were going to get arms, and that it would be alright if the British did not meet the arms before they did. As far as we knew then, Macroóm was our objective; we did not know that we were to go beyond it.

After being some time in Macroóm Pat Higgins told us the thing was cancelled, and we were to go home. That is all we knew about it. We took the train to Dooniskey and went up to where we had left the horses and carts at a farmhouse (Longs, possibly) near Bealnablath. The public house would not open for us, but the people in the farmhouse were very decent. They left us stay in their hayloft for the night. The food we had with us was destroyed by the heavy rain, and the woman of the house made tea for us that night, and again in the morning before we left. Mike Walsh was the only one who went home on Sunday night. He had seized two hens at the pub. when they would not open for us and proposed to cook them, but we let them go again.

On Easter Monday we marched back by the same route as we had gone out on Sunday, arriving at Ballinhassig about 3 or 4 o'clock in the afternoon. A Military lorry had passed us between Brinny and Crossbarry going towards Bandon, but had not interfered with us. At Killeady we got a newspaper and saw in it the news about the men whose car ran over the pier near Killorglin.

We stood to arms during the week. There were a lot of wild rumours. We were waiting for definite orders. There was an idea, the origin of which none of us can now remember, that Paddy Hyde was expecting an order from Ballinadee to attack the R.I.C. Barracks at Ballinhassig. We assembled every night in the village. On Tuesday night of Easter Week someone that we

did not know came from Cork and cancelled all orders. He said Dublin was being shelled, and generally gave a very alarming picture of the situation. He gave instructions that word was to be sent to Ballinadee cancelling all orders, and Paddy Hyde went to Ballinadee, walking across the slob to avoid going through Innishannon. We continued to stand to until the end of the week, but got no orders from anywhere.

On Wednesday morning, May 3rd, Fred Cronin came to Ballinhassig on a bicycle, saying that he wanted to get to Ballinadee to bring back Terence MacSwiney who had gone out there the previous night in a four-wheeled cab. Jerome Crowley cycled with Fred towards Ballinadee. At Innishannon they were held up by two police with rifles. Fred was searched and they were questioned as to their movements. Fred was aggressive and maintained his rights as a citizen to go where he wished on the public road, and held they had no authority to inquire into his business. A long wrangle ended with the police none the wiser. Jerome was not searched, fortunately, because he had a despatch receipt book on him at the time. It was usual for despatches from Ballinadee to pass through Ballinhassig. They went on the road towards Bandon cautiously. Some men told them there were soldiers on guard at the railway bridge ahead of them, that the whole country had been arrested, and the Hales taken to Bandon Barracks. They left the main road, went on to Wolfe's Cross, and then across the fields to within sight of Hales. They saw old Hales and went in. The house was in confusion. Terence MacSwiney and two of the Hales and two of the Hydes had been arrested and taken to Bandon. They returned to Innishannon on the way back and were again held up and taken to the Barracks this time. They were searched and let go. Jerome Crowley brought word of the arrests to Ballinhassig Company and Fred Cronin went on to Cork.

Michael Hyde and Tim Riordan decided that they were marked men and would be arrested anyhow, and that it was better to have the others go on the run for a while. On the following day, May 4th, Michael Hyde, Tim Riordan and John Leary were arrested. The local R.I.C. Sergeant asked Tim Riordan to give up the arms and there would be no more trouble. No arms were, however, given up and none were got in the raids.

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

Signed:

*Timothy Riordan*  
*Jerome Crowley*  
*Maurice Healy*

Date

*July 26<sup>th</sup> 1948*

Witness:

*Florence O'Donoghue*

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