

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21
No. W.S. 233

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 233.....

Witness

Mr. Edward Bailey,
17 Park St.,
Dundalk,
Co. Louth,

Identity

Company Quartermaster
Irish Volunteers 'C' Company, Dundalk,
1914-1916.

Subject

Mobilisation and marches in
Dundalk district Easter Week 1916.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil.

File No. ...S.1311.....

Form B.S.M. 2.

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STATEMENT BY EDWARD BAILEY, 17 PARK ST.,
DUNDALK.

I am now 52 years of age. I joined the Volunteers in 1914. I was young at the time. I don't know much about the split in the Volunteers in Dundalk. For some time after the split took place I was out of Dundalk in Knockbridge area and had little connection with the town.

In September 1915 I got a job in the Great Northern Railway Works in Dundalk and came back to town. I went to Paddy Hughes who was organising the Irish Volunteers and joined his party. I was appointed Quartermaster of the Company. We held drills in the Boyle O'Reilly Hall and did open air exercises, route marches and tactical work in the country outside Dundalk. We had a Canadian soldier training us for some time.

In C/Coy. we had about 20 shotguns and about 20 rifles. There was some ammunition for the rifles. There were about 8 to 10 fairly serviceable revolvers in the company. The company strength was about 40 to 45 men.

In 1915 I got to know about the existence of the I.R.B. and I went to Owen Grant and Thomas Hearty of Bridge St. and asked them to get me into the I.R.B. Both of them told me I was too young to be admitted into the organisation. I remained a member of C/Coy up to the Rising.

On Good Friday 1916, I got to know that a Rising was contemplated. I overheard a conversation between James Toal and John Finnegan, caretaker of the Boyle O'Reilly Hall, which convinced me that a rising was planned for Easter Sunday. Finnegan was a Drill Instructor in the Volunteers and James Toal was prominent in the I.R.B. On Holy Saturday evening I got orders to mobilise at the Boyle O'Reilly Hall at 10 a.m. on Easter Sunday. I was told to take rations for the day with me. On Sunday morning men from B. and C. Companies mobilised at the Boyle O'Reilly Hall. Others

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mobilised at the Workhouse Hill on the Ardee Road, outside the town. In all 70 to 72 men mobilised. When we moved off from the Hall I had a seat on Thomas Hearty's hackney sidecar. There were 6 including Hearty on the car. We had three shotguns and 3 revolvers on the car.

Paddy Hughes and D. O'Hannigan were in charge of the Volunteers and ordered us to take the road to Ardee. We had accompanying the men on the march a two horse brake, Thomas Hearty's sidecar and a horse-trap belonging to Paddy Hughes. The majority of the Volunteers had to walk. Vehicles were used by the men in relays to save them from the fatigue of constant marching. We arrived in the town of Ardee and halted at Campbell's Hotel. We were met there by Phil McMahon and another man named Wrenn. A big motor car was parked nearby on the street and McMahon and Wrenn supplied us with a quantity of rifles from his motor car. I think the rifles were of Yankee make. We did not delay very long in Ardee. We had some tea in the Hotel. Sergts. Weymes and Connolly of the Dundalk R.I.C. were with us from Dundalk and remained with us for some time. They were with us in Ardee. We left Ardee and took the road to Collon. We passed through Collon and marched into Slane. We remained Sunday night in Slane and took over a Bakery as shelter from the rain. It rained heavy all Sunday night. I don't remember when the countermanding order from Eoin MacNeill came to us. I know that one of the Volunteers left us on the road to Slane and went away on a motor bike. Tom Hamill and Sean McEntee left us early on Sunday morning. I remember both Hamill and McEntee having a conversation with Paddy Hughes and Donal O'Hannigan before they went away. I don't know what the conversation was about.

On Monday morning we got orders at Slane to form up and march back again in the direction of Collon. We had some refreshments in Garrigan's pub in Collon. Later we continued our march going in the direction of Dunleer. Near there at a farmer's place - Hanratty's - we drank the contents of a churn of buttermilk which

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the farmer gave us. We paid for the milk. From Dunleer we marched through Castlebellingham to Lurgangreen. On the march from Slane to Lurgangreen I was doing scout work on a bicycle preceding the marching men.

At Lurgangreen, Sean McEntee overtook us in a motor car and told us the Rising was on in Dublin. We then commenced to stop all motor cars coming from Fairyhouse races. Whilst commandeering those cars a party of R.I.C. coming from Dundalk direction approached our position and we opened fire on them. They did not reply to our fire but halted some distance from us down the road. We halted and made prisoners of about 6 British soldiers who were travelling unarmed in a car which we commandeered. We took bread and 2 sides of bacon from a passing breadcart. We all got into the commandeered cars and started back again in the direction of Castlebellingham. I was on the third car that arrived in Castlebellingham. In Castlebellingham some of our men went into shops to get supplies. Constable McGee, R.I.C., Castlebellingham, came on the scene. He was searched for papers and some documents were taken from him. Cars were still arriving from Fairyhouse and a Lieut. Dunville arrived from Dublin direction and we commandeered his car and made him a prisoner. He was not very nice about his treatment. Some shots were fired and Const. McGee fell on the road mortally wounded. I did not see the actual shooting. I saw McGee lying on the road after I heard the shooting. Lieut. Dunville went to McGee's assistance. Some time later we resumed our march.

We took the road in Dunleer direction and then branched off the Drogheda Road for County Meath. I didn't know the roads in this part of the country. We put up at a house somewhere in Co. Meath near Dunboyne. As we were to meet Sean Boylan and other Dunboyne men there. Boylan and about 7 others joined us at this house. We stayed at the house for about 2 days and then resumed our march and arrived at Tyrrellstown House near Mulhuddart, Co. Dublin. We took over Tyrrellstown House. The following men were in Tyrrellstown House:- Paddy Hughes, D. O'Hannigan, Paddy

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McHugh, Frank Martin, Hugh Kearney, John Kieran, Daniel Tuite, Peter Clifford, Richard O'Dowd, Owen O'Dowd, P. Mulholland, T. Mulholland, B. Liechfield, Dick Jameson, James Dunne, Arthur Green, Tom McCrave, Paddy Finn, Owen Clifford. There were others whom I cannot remember. In all, about 25 Dundalk men were in Tyrrellstown House. As we were told to hold Tyrrellstown House we had a constant and regular system of outposts and picquets in the vicinity of the house to prevent surprise by the enemy. During the weekend in the silence of the night we could hear the sounds of the firing in Dublin. We were able to get all the potatoes and milk we required in the place. When we required meat we killed sheep off the lands. In this way we lived on the produce of the farm attached to the house. One day we saw the caretaker of the place packing up and we asked him for an explanation and he told us he was under military orders to clear off the place.

When the caretaker insisted on leaving we detained him and we prepared to leave ourselves. We collected all our equipment, formed up and marched off. We proceeded back towards Co. Meath and returned to the house we stayed at - when going - near Dunboyne and remained in the house for about 2 nights. On Monday evening we dumped our arms and equipment and on Tuesday morning R. O'Dowd, Owen O'Dowd, Dick Jameson and myself started for Dundalk. We decided, if questioned, that we would say we were going to Duleek fair. We stayed in a hay barn that night and on Wednesday we travelled in Drogheda direction. That day we had breakfast at a house belonging to a woman who had a son killed at Ashbourne fight. As we had tea and sugar with us she supplied us with bread, butter, eggs and meat. She was very kind to us. After leaving the woman we walked to within a mile of Drogheda. I went into Drogheda and remained there with friends until the following ~~day~~ Sunday night and then went to Dunleer to an aunt of mine. I remained in Dunleer district and worked with farmers until 14th August 1916 when I came home to Dundalk. After I

came home I was evading arrest for some time and eventually got a job at the Harbour Board, checking herrings landed from fishing boats. I remained a member of the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Republican Army up to the Truce in 1921.

Signed: Edward Bailey

Date: 8th April 1949

Witness:

John Treacy
8/4/49

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