

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRÉ-MILÉATA 1913-21
NO. W.S. 312

ROINN  COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 312.....

Witness

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70 Irishtown Road,
Sandymount,
Dublin.
Identity

Member of 'B' Company, 2nd Battalion,
Dublin Brigade Irish Volunteers 1916.

Subject

The Easter Week Rising 1916 -
Jacob's Factory.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil

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No. W.S. 312

STATEMENT BY SEOSAMH DE BRÚN

70 Irishtown Road, Sandymount, Dublin.

Easter Sunday morning, April 23rd., was fixed for a general mobilisation of the Dublin Brigade, Irish Volunteers. Intense and somewhat anxious interest was centered in the event, particularly after the reported sinking of the "Aud" laden with munitions off the coast of Kerry and the sensational arrest of Sir Roger Casement on Good Friday. Many divined that a crucial period was developing, the call to duty was regarded as inexorable in view of those incidents. Consequently whatever arrangements I personally had or was inclined to make for spending the holidays in the usual manner, required to be of a tentative character. The countermanding of the general mobilisation order early Sunday morning by Commandant Eoin MacNeill gave rise to speculation to which increasing rumours of various kinds lent added zest. Although the general parade was called off many of the Company opined that it was only postponed, and an instantaneous mobilisation might be ordered at any moment during the coming week; in fact it was even expected that evening, so perfect was the military system of the Volunteers that immediate mobilisation was only a matter of a couple of hours. With those ideas in mind I reported to 2nd Battalion Headquarters, Fairview Park, that afternoon where I saw Commandant Thomas Hunter and other members of B. Company, to which I was attached. Ammunition was being distributed, no mobilisation was likely that evening though, perhaps, not improbable.

Easter Monday morning gave promise of an ideal holiday. Brilliant sunshine and warm dry weather invited one to the mountains or seaside. Turning over in my mind which I should

choose, as I left the house, I noticed at the corner of Seville Place a group of Volunteers in uniform. Seems like a Company mobilisation I thought. Going over I asked was such the case, they replied they had orders to mobilise. I decided to go to Fairview Park and at Newcomen Bridge met Captain Weafer cycling towards the city. Hailing him I enquired if the parade was general. "Yes", replied the Captain "get over to Stephen's Green the 2nd Battalion mobilises there at 11 o'clock". I will be late for this parade I thought, for it wanted only a couple of minutes to the hour. I went back "hot foot" to the house in Amiens Street, stripped myself hurriedly of holiday attire and got into service rig. I took the precaution of taking extra accoutrement, for somehow I felt anything might happen though the actual Rising was far from my thoughts. I jumped on a tram to the Pillar, another to Stephen's Green. I got there at 11.20. A large number of Volunteers had assembled, others were arriving, the mobilisation I perceived had only begun. The usual group of sightseers were watching us amongst whom I noticed Detective "Johnny Barton" of the G. Division, an interested spectator. Johnny was a well known figure to Gaels. He was killed during the fighting that took place preceding the Treaty. He was credited with having identified Sean MacDiarmuidha, McBride and others after the 'Cease Fire' in Easter Week.

There was a mixed assemblage of numerous Companies on Stephen's Green. I joined those of B. Company. About 12 o'clock, Commandants Hunter, McDonagh and other officers were moving briskly about; suddenly we got the order to "fall in" and "quick march". We "Right turned" into Cuffe Street and in somewhat loose military order proceeded to Kevin Street. Alongside those I marched was Sam Ellis on a hackney;

car, his arms around a large heavy-looking box which I surmised was ammunition. When we came to Jacob's Factory, part of the troops commanded by Commandant Thomas McDonagh took possession of the building: the large section in which I was marched to cross Kevin Street past the Police Barracks to New Street, down Fumbally's Lane where we took possession of Barracks buildings which we put immediately into a state of defence. Extra ammunition was distributed. On the top floor, where the windows commanded the approach to Blackpitts, we were paraded by Commandant Thomas Hunter who in a short characteristic address said "Men! The Irish Republic has been proclaimed in Dublin to-day; we are in action; the Headquarters of the Irish Republican Army is at the General Post Office, which has been taken possession of by the Republican troops. We are fighting to establish the Irish Republic. I trust every man here will give loyal and obedient service and will acquit himself as a gallant soldier in the cause of Irish Independence". We were standing to attention. We relaxed; a loud cheer rang through the building, some saluted, others raised their guns: one, a recruit evidently, called for spiritual ministrations, thinking he was going to be sent at once before his Maker. An order was issued, windows were smashed, glass crashed, rifles were thrust out in search of appropriate positions; the realisation we were in action was swiftly upon us. A squad was moved to the corner of Mill Street, another facing Blackpitts. A coachbuilder's yard at the corner was forced open and the lumber taken to form barricades. The people of the neighbourhood gathered with lively curiosity. They seemed at a loss to know whether we were in action or merely on manoeuvres: as the day wore on they too began to realise the seriousness of their position especially when a tall Volunteer not quite seasoned to arms

during a false alarm that the British were approaching let his Howth gun fall to the ground, a charge was released with a report that made his comrades as well as a number of the people jump with the shock. It was the first shot, though an accidental one, fired by our lot. One chap declared it nearly took the tip of his ear off. After this the people kept a respectful distance, though numbers considered at the time to be British soldiers' dependents or sympathisers were definitely hostile. Several times they essayed to tear down the barricades, our men displayed great good temper. They seemed to know those people did not understand, at times patience became brittle and but for the knowledge that they were of the proletariat reprisals might have followed. It was the first real lesson in actual discipline we learned, it was justified, as before the week was out those very people were madly enthusiastic in the cause of the Irish Republic.

During the day we had tea made for us by two ladies who lived near by named O'Byrne, (I think). Towards evening the rawness of our initiation to active service began to wear off though the strain of expectancy was still with us. About 7 o'clock we got the order to retire from Barracks, which it seems had only been occupied as an outpost, to intercept troops coming from Portobello Barracks. Apparently it was regarded as of no further immediate strategic value. We retired with our prisoners, two police officers, through New Street, cross Kevin Street to Jacob's factory.

Jacob's factory.

In the factory we found a strenuous atmosphere. Instead of the spick and span citizen soldiery as they would appear on parade, the garrison had the appearance of a laborious

day's toil. Barricades were raised on windows, doorways and other points of defence, men were moving about covered with flour from head to toe, many hatless, some with coats off, actually engaged in the work of fortification, others were already in position awaiting the enemy. Officers moved briskly about issuing orders. ~~What~~ With their various arms and equipment the garrison presented a strangely incongruous appearance. Some were dressed in full uniform, the green showing pale beneath its mist of flour in striking contrast with the civilian garb of others, with cavalry bandolier, or canvas ammunition pouch, ration bag or other serviceable equipment. The assorted types of rifles, the devastating double-barrelled shot-gun, the crack Winchester repeater, and latest pattern Lee Enfield British service magazine rifle and bayonet, or the most powerful of all, the Howth rifle fitted with long curved French bayonet, together with small arms from point 32.c to German parabellum, the whole ensemble suggested a scene that could only be pictured by reading a description - say Carlyle's, of the French Revolution, yet not near so vivid in description as the actual appearance of revolution presented before our gaze. We were escorted to positions. The boiler house with its red tiled floor was our first post.

McDonagh's address.

After some time we were called, together with other units on a general parade and addressed by Commandant McDonagh. In picturesque language, of which he was master, he gave an account of the Rising as it developed during the day, of the reinforcements marching to our aid from outlying districts, of allies landings on various parts of the coast, and of the reports that German submarines had formed a cordon around the country which effectually menaced any attempt on the part of the British to reinforce their Garrisons with the

aid of the British fleet. He also paid tribute to the magnificent qualities of soldierly discipline and energy displayed by the troops under his command, he made particular reference to the men who took possession and were fortifying Jacobs amongst whom he singled out Eamon (Mac 'e) Comerford and Volunteer P. McDonnell and promoted them Lieutenants for distinguished service. Major McBride who had joined in the operations of the day was formally promoted to the rank of Commandant, in which capacity he was of invaluable service during the occupation.

Commandant McBride also addressed us in inspiring language. The encouraging words of those two splendid personalities had a buoyant effect on the men, the seriousness of the situation was forgotten in the spirit of adventure. Cheers and cries of "long live the Republic" rang throughout the building. It was a memorable scene in this dimly lit factory with its vast machinery shrouded with dust wraps, carefully placed by the workers ere they left off on the previous Saturday. It was now about dusk and the shadows were beginning to glimmer. Seamus Ó h-Aodha was evidently guide or inspector of positions and he led our section to a billet for the night. It was the engine room and boiler house at the base of the big chimney. The atmosphere was pleasantly warm and we threw ourselves on the tiled floor and tried to sleep for a while. The next picket was to report at the end of 4 Hrs, The inclination to sleep wore away after a while on the hard floor, most of us had visions of blankets and snug mattresses, and then there was something uncomfortably threatening about that big chimney shaft. "Suppose" said Pat Callan "a shell struck it and the damn thing crashed". It was most improbable at this stage it would occur, but the thought was disconcerting, the

heat was telling on us. We were half dozing already. After a while of fitful sleep I was called to guard duty.

The next day (Tuesday) was spent erecting barricades with sacks of flour. The horses in the stables were removed to safety in case of fire. A squad was soon busy there smashing through walls making through communication to the outside of the building. Inflammable materials were removed as a precaution against incendiary shells. During the progress of this work we were begrimed with dust and sweat, coats off, rifles within easy reach, we worked as never we did before. Big Sergeant Pádraig Ó. ^{Cadairín (S.D.B.)} Ceallaigh, for he held this rank during Easter Week, a carpenter by trade, with a sledge hammer in his brawney fists driving a steel bar through the brickwork, others punching with heavy levers, more cleaning away the debris, carrying bricks, a scene of determined laborious activity in which danger was forgotten. Amidst the quip and crack of a joke, direct communication, without being exposed to rifle fire was made with the main building. Barbed wire entanglements were erected in the yard to trap the feet of the unwary invader. By Wednesday the entire factory was in a state of perfect defence against a hand to hand attack from any exposed point.

Notwithstanding this it was clear a few well directed shells would have made Jacobs a death-trap for the Garrison. On the other hand suppose an attempt was made to take the place by assault, what carnage might have occurred around those machines on the ground floor. The fighting would be of a desperate nature. A few of the squad toyed with the grindstones in the Machine shop, sharpened bayonets and pen-knives for the twofold purpose of shearing the enemy and rations. Speculations about the military value of the

Factory were interrupted by orders to erect barricades at various interior passages. Our position faced the Adelaide Hospital and Bishop Street.

Incessant rifle fire was exchanged with snipers, together with gunfire from the College of Surgeons held by the Countess Markiewitz and Commandant Mallon, and attacks and defence of outposts. This continued day and night, a slight lull in the dark hours before dawn, broken by occasional interchange by alert snipers, to increase in intensity at dawn when we were always "standing too" against attack.

The Factory was at this time in an admirable state of military organisation. A rest base had been prepared where drafts from all the sections in turn were sent for a day's rest and recreation. The base was supplied with blankets, mattresses, pillows &c. brought in by the foraging parties. After nights lying on tiled or metal floors, the strenuous exertion erecting defences, exciting rushes to attention, the men reclined, smoked, read and chatted, some wrote diaries of events to date. This rest was a real relaxation, every man came away from it refreshed in mind and body.

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A supply store and canteen under the supervision of Hannraí Ó hAnnracháin was plentifully provided with clothing, boots, tobacco and commodities that made for personal comfort displayed on long benches. The store was much appreciated, underclothing, socks &c. were a boon to many, after three days of ^{almost} 24 hours ^{continuous activity} ~~each~~ in complete original attire, through which flour and grime had penetrated to cake in sweaty shirts, without even removing our boots. The luxury of washing one's feet in a bucket, a new pair of socks, a pair of new boots and we felt we could march to the Wicklow hills and fight every inch of the way, if necessary. To add to those conveniences

another and more homely service manifested itself by the active participation in the commissariat department of the Cumann na mBan amongst whom I recognised Maire Ní Siublaigh, Mrs. O'Daly and others I now forget. Our repetition diet of biscuits and sweets was soon replaced by more palatable rations of vegetables and meat. How much of the personal comforts were provided for the Garrison by those courageous women can not be estimated, their appearance on the scene must have largely contributed to this side of the organisation of the Factory. A piano was strummed occasionally in an upper portion of the building in contrast with the rifle fire. The book-case in the library was broken open and pillaged. I can distinctly remember the interest evoked by quotations from "Julius Caesar", the battle of Pharsalia, etc. Joe Thunder, Seamus Ó Maolfhainn, Frank Kearney, Mick Slator - ^{Tom (S Del)} ~~Joe~~ Pugh, Peadar Ó Cearnaigh to mention a few made a study circle during fatigue hours. It reminded one of a school rather than a war camp. Nor was humour lacking, every day a diminutive soldier of the Fianna Eireann both in stature and years - the youngest recruit I believe of the heroic boys who fought with us armed with double barrelled shot gun slung over his shoulder escorted two stalwart six foot odd policemen prisoners to the helpful task of peeling potatoes for the troops. This daily parade as it passed brought smiles to the faces of many if not to the prisoners. "Fancy" said some one, "the ignominy to which two pillars of the most detested force in the British imperial administration in Ireland had been reduced. Had not the tables turned? the baton no longer held sway. Oh memories of 1913, the armed citizen has appeared, the National Will prevails."

By this time the entire Factory presented the appearance of a well organised military base, the periodical inspections of the positions by Commandants McDonagh, McBride and staff convinced us that thorough organisation and discipline were desired and obtained. Everybody had settled down to particular duties. Forage parties were active, communication with outside Forces was well maintained, Micheal Ó Caomhanaigh and Michael Ó hAodha were frequently seen on return from reconnoitring duties and gave information of the fighting in other parts of the city and country, of the defence of Davy's Public-house at Portobello bridge which held up any attempt by the British troops to leave Portobello barracks, of the death of Risteárd Ó Cearbhaill in Camden Street or Harcourt Street, of the fierce fighting around King Street and the burning of Linenhall Military Barracks by Republican forces under the command of Commandant O'Daly, the occupation and defence of the Mendicity buildings, the terrific fighting in the Marrowbone Lane Distillery under Commandant Eamon Kent, of the Battle of Ashbourne and the victory of the Republican troops: those stories and rumours of other developments were many such as the appearance of the loyalist veterans on the streets co-operating with the British, and the heavy losses inflicted by Commandant De Valera on the enemy advancing from Kingstown, were told us in language which aroused enthusiasm for our cause. Thus the days passed, sniping was causing us trouble, some of our crack shots were brought to the tower which dominated the area, Ned Lyons distinguished himself by the deadly accuracy of his fire, a certain enemy sniper who dominated one of our positions by his sharp shooting was soon silenced.

Rifle and machine gun fire was continuous during the day only slackening towards nightfall when it became intermittent. The nights were sombre and awesome as we stood on guard we heard the noise of the improvised armoured cars as they raced around the side streets reconnoitring our position. On Wednesday towards the middle of the week the firing increased in intensity, the crack of the artillery was heard above the rattle of machine gun fire and the loud bang of the Howth gun. The heavy guns of the British were in action, a red glare appeared in the sky, the General Post Office was on fire with incendiary shells. I could see the sky illuminated through the window whilst on night watch, the general attack was developing. What the result would be none then knew.

Watching the reflection of the burning city through that window, for by this time O'Connell Street was burning, listening to the constant booming of the Artillery, the smaller boom of the Howth gun, the sharp whip-like report of the Winchester as snipers exchanged shots, I discussed with Captain Dick McKee while on his inspection the probable outcome of events. Of one thing we were sure, the Home Rule Bill was dead, an end had been made of Parliamentary humbug on the question of Irish National self government. McKee who appeared more optimistic believed the Republic proclaimed on Monday would endure. He was a fine specimen of a military officer, tall and dark-complexioned with a stern mien he impressed me as a man naturally adapted for military life. With his swinging parabellum automatic in his hand at New Street barricades, short crisp-toned orders, an alert look and well tailored uniform he inspired confidence as a leader. He struck me as a man not to be trifled with and of relentless,

implacable purpose. Yet behind this exterior character was a frank and boyish disposition. A Lieutenant, he was promoted Captain in the Factory by McDonagh.

The night-watch in this corridor from the front gate to the Machine room was a lonely vigil before dawn. Gunfire had ceased for a while, with the exception of the interchange of a sniper, silence reigned. Watching the red glare in the sky, the burning city was to my rear, I surmised when the attack would be made on the spot where I was standing, as I glanced at the loaded Lee Enfield rifle that sharpened bayonet reminded me of frightfulness. I suppose many a soldier has ruminated on similar thoughts. Well, what the hell were we fighting for in any case? Can this damn thing called Freedom not be achieved in any other way? I was getting vexed. The red glow answered with a deeper hue. A burst of new gunfire announced the dawn, the attack had recommenced. It was now Thursday morning.

News was brought in that Captain Weafer had been killed defending Reis's building in O'Connell Street. Peadar Macken was shot fighting with De Valera at Bolands. Many other casualties we heard of the battle was increasing in intensity. Communications with the different commands was becoming more difficult. In this work of reconnoitring women were of invaluable service, they could pass where men were held up. The garrison was ever on the alert; we did not know the hour of attack or what would be done if the factory had to be evacuated. The Shelbourne Hotel ^{we heard} had been occupied by British troops and machine guns were spraying the College of Surgeons from the roof. We erected another barricade at a gateway leading to Bishop Street. In this operation I cut a finger and proceeded to the Red Cross first

aid station in a square office in the middle of the ground floor. The station and hospital were under the supervision of Patrick Cahill, a chemist, assisted by Dick Davis. Outside Pharmacies had provided through foragers surgical and chemical requisites to augment those found on the premises. After examination the tall and bearded Davis immediately took me in charge dressing the wound with almost professional skill. The Red Cross service here was ready for any emergency. Catholic clergymen came to hear confessions. I believe many of the men had the option of leaving and not a single man left.

On Friday morning terrific fighting was taking place at Mount Street bridge where enormous losses were inflicted on the enemy. De Valera was valiantly holding the British advance around Bolands Mill. Units of various sections in the factory were called out for a sortie. We were paraded by Commandant McDonagh, who told every man to select a push bicycle from a heap of machines near by. I happened to select a first class one with a rifle holder and was pleased with my luck.

The Commandant then addressing us said - "De Valera is very hard pressed at Westland Row Railway Station and Boland's Mill. I am sending out a party to make a diversion and reinforce him, doubtless you will meet with opposition. If you encounter the enemy and find your retreat cut off, take possession of the nearest houses, and make the most of it. We must draw the attack off Boland's Mill." Young Lieutenant O'Riordan was placed in command of the party which numbered about twenty men. From this address we gathered our mission was a hazardous one. Some one suggested a cup of tea, it was preparing nearby,

the Commandant acquiesced. He was a very approachable man in this respect. Indeed the spirit of officers and men was redolent of comradeship and cheeriness. Although the responsibilities of the situation were heavy on Commandant McDonagh no sign of this appeared in his demeanour.

We gathered our ammunition together, threw off all surplus stock and left by the Whitefriar Street exit. Since Monday it was the first time I was outside the building. It was the early morning and it was with a feeling of exhilaration I dropt the smell of the stuffy Factory. The weather was ideal. I thought of the proposed holiday that might never come off. On a morning like this any adventure could be attempted, perhaps that is why attacks start so fiercely at dawn. This feeling seemed to permeate the men. O'Rourke had two long feathers sticking out of his cap like an Indian Brave. We chaffed him as we sped up Leeson Street. We passed a barricade at the Russell Hotel, Stephen's Green, without interference from the Shelbourne Hotel and without mishap. We went through Pembroke Street, turned into Fitzwilliam Square and then into Fitzwilliam Street. At Baggot Street corner one of the brother Walshes (Jack) was put in charge of a Red Cross man as a precaution. We heard a section of the Red Cross were assisting the British. We cycled down Merrion Street when suddenly from the north end of Merrion Square we came under fire. ⁴ Kaiki clad men from Mount Street ran to the roadway dropt on their knees and blazed away, others from round the corner of the Square fired through the railings. O'Riordan yelled "take cover". We jumped from our machines. There was little cover to take. I got possession of an electric trem standard in the middle of the road. Others got to railings and doorways, in fact there was precious little

The British troops

cover. I believe they were part of the raw recruits hurried from England to the attack on Mount Street. However, it was evident our objective, Westland Row Railway Station, would not be reached without being trapped and surrounded. O'Riordan gave an order to fall back. We remounted our machines, some covering the retirement until we were all in motion. An unconsciously humorous episode occurred here. O'Riordan, when we were taking cover, roared to one who took what he considered the best cover on the road, though paradoxically the most exposed, "Ay so and so, get away from there, do you want to be shot?" One would imagine a manoeuvre rather than a battle was taking place.

We sped back, our short arms at the ready, this time through Fitzwilliam Street to Leeson Street Bridge via Leeson Street to Stephen's Green past the Shelbourne hotel without a single shot, through the Russell Hotel barricade to the west side of the Green. As we rounded the corner towards York Street machine gun and rifles sounded with infernal din. We came under heavy fire from the top of Grafton Street. The Shelbourne and College of Surgeons came into direct action. Every post in the vicinity engaged. A breeze of bullets whizzed by us. I thought, and one thinks quickly in those situations, we would never turn York Street corner. Proud's lane^d is a near turn, I zig-zaged my bicycle to dodge snipers. Towards the lane some one comes up swiftly on my left, I swerve out to the middle of the road, deliberately slow I must widely turn into York Street and I do. Some one is hit. It's O'Grady. I think he came up on my left. We fall back as a rearguard while he is taken to the factory. When we reach there he is lying wounded in the groin and shin, poor fellow the pallor of death is in his face. The Red Cross are attending him. But for the

covering fire of the College of Surgeons we would all be shot to pieces. Many of the Company went through Cuffe Street.

Commandants McDonagh and McBride eagerly question us on the sortie. McDonagh evidently satisfied exclaimed: "Audacity's the thing!" Audacity's the thing!"

By this time the Insurrection was well advanced. We hear that Eamon Ceannt was still stoutly defending his position in the South Dublin Union, Ned Daly causing havoc on the North side. The Imperial Hotel was being consumed by fire. Throughout the country the movement was spreading. The big guns could be heard from every direction. Most of our news arrived by courier. We were not aware of the growing superiority of the enemy. The remainder of the day passed on fatigue duty.

Saturday, St. Patrick's Park was occupied by British troops. People had evacuated the houses in the neighbourhood. We expected attack any moment. The Adelaide Hospital was preparing for evacuation. The issue for the Garrison was rapidly approaching. Rumours came thick and fast. Communications were becoming more difficult to maintain. We chatted with people through the wired windows in Bishop Street. We were told Archbishop Walsh was trying to arrange a truce. There was a cessation of gunfire, yet we stood to arms. The suspense was noticeable. We heard Commandant McDonagh had called to see Pearse and that the General Post Office was burnt out. Carrying the wounded, this garrison was fighting its way to other positions. If our position was shelled we would

likely have to fight our way to the Dublin Mountains and probably join up with contingents from Wicklow, Wexford, Carlow and other centres. Would our ammunition last out? I had over 60 rounds of rifle and a share of revolver stuff. These and other speculations ran through our minds. Only Headquarters Staff knew the actual situation as it stood then.

We were informed Commandant Pearse was in conference with General Maxwell and favoured surrender. The other Republican leaders were opposed, McDonagh particularly. Two Capuchin Clergymen were actively intervening, Fathers Albert and Augustine. Whilst the pourparlers were on we took advantage of the lull. By Sunday morning I had grown a stubble of beard I was anxious to remove. I was rejoiced to find a comrade who possessed a new safety razor. He lent me the instrument, which I still possess as a souvenir. I removed the surplus hair and incidentally removed sections of my chin as well. It was the first and last time I used a safety razor. Commandant McDonagh had now returned and a conference was taking place of all the Senior Officers at staff headquarters on the ground floor. This lasted some time. After the conference all ranks got an order to parade at Headquarters. Two cowled clergymen were present, Fathers Albert and Augustine. Commandant McDonagh looked very serious as did most of the staff. Addressing the Parade in a broken voice he told us "that he had been in communication with Commandant General Pearse and other General Officers. They had discussed the progress of the Republican forces during the week. They had come to the conclusion that a splendid assertion of Irish Independence had been gallantly made by the Army and its supporters, noble sacrifices had been made in the cause of Irish Freedom. Having regard to all the circumstances Commandant

/Commandant

General Pearse was convinced that further sacrifice of life would be futile. With the welfare of the Irish people and the Army at heart he had decided to cease hostilities. He had agreed with the Commander of the British Forces, General Maxwell, to surrender on the guarantee that the men of the Irish Republican Army be treated as prisoners of war. Here McDonagh broke down and sobbed bitterly as did many of the officers and men. Some one asked what would happen the Commandant and other Leaders. McDonagh replied that for himself he did not know but he was assured the lives of the men would be safe. Father Augustine here intervened and said he was present at the conference with General Maxwell and was assured the Army would be treated as prisoners of war. There were loud cries of dissent amongst the men against surrender. Many were crying fiercely and shouting, "Fight it out!" "Fight it out!" "We will fight it out!" Dick McKee was most vehemently opposed to surrender. Volunteer O'Malley - a Tailor by trade - loudly demanded to "fight it out", brandishing his shot gun. The Senior Officers, Commandants McBride and Hunter, were silent. They were resigned to the inevitability of surrender. Some one said the garrison was to march out carrying their arms and flags as prisoners of war. I was with Commandant Hunter after the parade broke up. He also wept bitterly with disappointment at the end of the struggle. Many of the men smashed their guns on the steel floors rather than surrender them to the British. Numbers of the men were given the option to escape from the building and availed of it. The majority marched with their officers under arms to the internment camp to the Castle Yard and thence to the Richmond Barracks. The Factory was then taken over by a detachment of the Dublin Fusiliers and by a curious coincidence as one brother left

the factory in the Republican ranks another marched into it in the uniform of the British Army. Looking back with some knowledge of the organisation of the different forces of the Dublin Brigade in the various areas of activities during Easter Week, it is evident that though all the other units of command were incessantly fighting, defending and consolidating their positions, though the General Post Office was the most important position and here the heaviest fighting occurred around O'Connell Street, Jacob's factory and its environs was the scene of military activities during the Week, the importance of which, I believe, has not yet been realized in connection with the whole story of the Rising. The more one knows of the splendid organisation, of the complete state of defence, of the order and discipline that emerged after the first two days of occupation, of the many raids and sorties made from the Garrison, of the factory's adaptability for supplying the needs of troops and the population on the south side of the city, with bread and flour should the emergency arise, and it did arise, the more one recognises the importance of Jacob's factory in the general plan of the Rising. The part played by Cumann na mBan in its defence and domestic organisation, of the Fianna Boy Scouts in its espionage system, when the whole story of the different parts of the factory is collected, it will prove that Commandants McDonagh, McBride and Hunter and their staffs achieved in a short space of time a state of efficiency under their commands and controlled activities which were and would have been of more vital importance had the Rising been prolonged and Dublin held for a longer time. As it was the garrison adequately served the needs of the

Dublin Brigade as they arose during the eventful week in the area which it commanded and operated, to my mind and I write, not because I was of the garrison, but, rather because I know of the part played in its contribution to the History of Ireland at this momentous period. I desire to record my version of this epic week and to place the credit for its achievement as far as Jacob's factory is concerned to the memory of the brilliant and practical minds of the Commandants of the 2nd Battalion of the Dublin Brigade of the Irish Republican Army who directed this area of the Brigade's activities.

Signed:

Seoyan de Brún

Date:

22nd October 1949

Witness:

Mblaney J. J.

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