

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 44



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ROINN COSANTA.

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

(Bureau of Military History 1913-21),

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(Dublin).

Confidential

DOCUMENT W.S. 44

Statement by:

Edmond Twomey,
Mallow Road,
Rathpeacon, Co.Cork.

Dated: 16th October, 1947.

On: Seizure of British ammunition
from trains at Cork and
Kilbarry, 1915-1916.

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BURO STAIRS MILITARY 1913-21
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STATEMENT OF EDMOND TWOMEY, THE BUNGALOW,
MALLOW ROAD, RATHPEACON, CORK.

UNIT: 'C' Company, Cork City, I.V.

PERIOD: December, 1913 to 1916.

I was a member of 'C' Company, Cork City Irish Volunteers, from the start of the organisation up to Easter, 1916, and after that of 'A' Company, 1st Battalion, Cork No. 1 Brigade.

In 1915 and 1916 I was employed in the Traffic Dept., Great Southern and Western Railways, and was engaged in shunting in the Goods Yard at Cork. In the course of my work I observed that wagons of ammunition were sometimes consigned to Military Posts, and I got the idea of seizing some of this ammunition for the Volunteers. It was easy for me to have the wagon shunted into a suitable position for the removal of a box of ammunition, as I had an engine, a driver and a fireman at my disposal for normal shunting, but it was a difficult matter without assistance to open a wagon, reseal it, conceal the box and get the ammunition away.

The wagons were sealed by tying the handles of the two doors together with tape and then sealing the ends of the tape on to the wood of one of the doors. Sealing wax was melted on the wood first, the tapes were put over it, and it was then stamped "Cork goods 1" or 2 or 3 or 4 as the case may be. I found that it was possible, with care, to take the whole seal off intact with a penknife and to re-affix it by slightly melting the wax at the back.

Each box of ammunition I took in this way contained 1,000 rounds of .303 in canvas bandoliers containing 50 rounds each. I buried the boxes in a quiet place in the Yard known as the dead wall and gradually took the bandoliers of ammunition, over my shoulders and around my waist under my outer clothing, to the Volunteer Hall in Sheares Street. I had great trouble in breaking open the first box, not realising that I had a sliding lid. I found the others were easier to open on account of knowing how by drawing the sliding lid. There were no guards on these wagons at the time, but after ~~the~~ 1916 military guards used to travel with them.

I do not remember how many boxes of ammunition I got in this way, but during 1915 and early 1916 I availed of any opportunities that arose and as soon as I had one box cleared began to look out for a chance of getting another. I could take out six bandoliers of 50 rounds each at a time - one over each shoulder, two around my waist and two in my pockets. One night at the Hall when I had brought up some ammunition, Sean O'Sullivan introduced me to Terence MacSwiney.

At that time very few Railwaymen were in sympathy

with us; most of them had relatives in the British Army, and I had to do the job in such a way that no one would see me. One day when I had a half-full box buried near the dead wall another Railwayman found it; he noticed the place freshly rooted up. Although he was not in the Volunteers and had no sympathy with us, he came to me and told me it was there. He never told anyone else about finding it. He knew I was in the Volunteers and I thought it was very decent of him to give me the tip.

On one occasion Denis Murphy, who was also employed as a shunter in the Goods Yard, located a wagon which contained gelignite. He called me to his assistance. We took one box and opened it, and found that the gelignite was made up in cartons. We divided it between us to take out, and I took my half to Tomas MacCurtain at his shop at Blackpool.

A railwayman named Tom Murphy worked on the same idea at Kilbarry. In the autumn or early Winter of 1915 he took five boxes of .303 ammunition out of a wagon and put them in a cattle wagon. At the first chance he got he removed them to a field near the line and concealed them. He then went to Con or Jerh. Delaney at Dublin Hill and they got the stuff taken into the city.

There was a train examiner named Jack McCarthy at Cork Passenger side, now in Mallow, who did good work also. Some time before 1916 a soldier left a rifle in a carriage. McCarthy saw it but had no means of getting it away at the time. He unscrewed the cushion part of the seat in the carriage and hid the rifle there. It made two trips to Rosslare and back before he was able to arrange to get it put in a covered car in Cork and taken away.

Before 1916 we sent some dispatches for the Volunteers by passenger guards to Tralee and Dublin and afterwards in the Tan War there was a lot of such work.

During my turns on evening duty I searched the Goods Yard each evening for wagons containing rifles or ammunition. On one evening before East, 1916 I found a wagon containing several large cases which were labelled - Rifles. I found out from Paddy Hickey who worked in the Goods Office that this wagon contained from 80 to 100 rifles. As Jack McCarthy always returned to the Station by arrangement during my evening duty I told him about the wagon of rifles, and he went to the Volunteer Hall in Sheares Street immediately and informed the officer there of same. If they had organised a raid I could have shunted the wagon of rifles to the quayside for discharge to a lorry, but they took no action.

Questions were asked in the House of Commons about the loss of ammunition in Cork before 1916.

SIGNED: Edmond Ywony

DATE: October 16th 1944

WITNESS: Florence Donoghue

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SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE TO BE ATTACHED TO
STATEMENT OF EDMOND TWOMEY, THE
BUNGALOW, MALLOW ROAD, RATHPEACON, CORK.

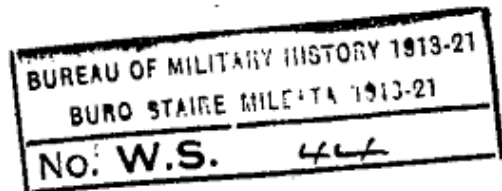
I was trained at the Volunteer Hall in Sheares' Street to be a soldier of Erin. I purchased a Lee Enfield magazine rifle and secured 100 rounds of .303 ammunition, also a revolver and 50 rounds of .32 ammunition.

I took part in parades in the city, and went to Dublin to take part in the funeral procession to Glasnevin when O'Donovan Rossa was being buried.

I paraded with full equipment on Easter Sunday, 1916, and went on to Macroom and was told that we would return to Cork that night.

SIGNED: Edmond Twomey

DATE: October 22nd 1947.



WITNESS: Florence Donohue.