

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 72



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BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

(Bureau of Military History 1913-21),

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BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH.
(Dublin).

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Statement by: John Cahalane,
Lyre, Clonakilty,
Co. Cork.

Dated: 5th November, 1947.

On: Lyre Coy. I.V., 1915-1916.

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STATEMENT OF JOHN CAHALANE, LYRE, CLONAKILTY,
CO. CORK.

PERIOD: AUGUST 1915 TO MAY 1916.

UNIT: LYRE COMPANY, I.V.

The Lyre Company was started about the end of August, 1915. Jim Walsh and I and some others went to Aichill where a meeting was held on a Sunday. At this meeting the Clogough Company paraded and Terence MacSwiney spoke. We had some conversation with him, as a result of which we decided to form a Company at Lyre. There was not then, and had not been at any time previously, a Volunteer organisation in Lyre, though there was a strong Company of National Volunteers in Clonakilty.

Soon after Lyre Company was formed the following Officers were elected, and there was no change of Officers down to Easter, 1916:-

Captain: Jim Walsh, Knockea, Lyre.
Secretary: Jack Cahalane, Lyre.
Quartermaster: Tim Crowley, Letter, Clonakilty.

We started with about twenty men, but by the end of 1915 we had about thirty, which was our maximum strength up to Easter, 1916. Local feeling was generally hostile or indifferent.

The men paid a weekly subscription of 2d and by Easter everyone was equipped with haversacks, caps, belts and bandoliers. A few had puttees.

Parades were held once a week and every Sunday. On the Sunday parades we marched to several places in the neighbourhood, such as Bealad, Ardfield, Ballygurteen, Barryroe, Rosscarbery, and held meetings in an endeavour to get Companies going in these places. Jim Walsh usually spoke. It was difficult to make any headway, but a Company was got going in Ardfield. Although some organisation existed in the other districts, no men from them turned out on Easter Sunday, 1916.

We had about thirty men in the Manchester Martyrs' Parade in Cork in November, 1915, and about the same number in the St. Patrick's Day parade, 1916.

We held a parade on Corran Hill on Christmas Day, 1915. There was a legend concerning this hill, and people used to assemble there on Christmas Day. The whole country came after us on that parade.

Jim Walsh attended the course for Officers run in the Hall in Sheares Street in January, 1916.

About a fortnight before Easter, 1916, Terence MacSwiney came out to us and discussed with the Officers the orders for Easter Sunday. The impression he made on us was that the Volunteer organisation was threatened with attack, that they might as well have the first of the fight, and that fight would be put on them if they did not. He did not say anything definite about the purpose of the march on Easter Sunday, nor did he say anything about a landing of arms. I did not know where we were going on Easter Sunday, but I have a recollection that somehow I got the impression that we were to get arms, though I had no idea of where we were to get them.

Terence MacSwiney explained that Ballinadee Company and the other Companies to the east of us would be moving towards Macroom, and that we had the choice of going with them or of joining the Dunmanway Company and going to Inchigeela. When it was clear that the choice lay with us, the Company Captain, Jim Walsh, decided that we would go to Inchigeela.

A meeting of the whole Company was held on Easter Saturday evening and arrangements made for next day. The men were told no more than that we were going on a march, and when one man asked the direct question, "Would we come back", he got no answer. With the feeling of tension that existed we all felt that something serious was about to happen, that we may be in a fight the next day, but we had no definite information of a Rising or of how or where we ourselves would become involved. Many of the men went to Confession and received Holy Communion in Dunmanway next morning. The Captain, Jim Walsh, went to Confession, but did not receive next morning, with the idea, I think, of not alarming the men.

The following eighteen men mobilised at Knockea Cross in the early hours of Easter Sunday morning:-

James Walsh.
John Cahalane.
Tim Crowley.
Charles Cullinane.
John Cullinane.
Jerry Donovan.
John Carey.
Arthur O'Leary.
James Meade.
William Meade.
Dan Bennett.
Dan Leary.
Jim Leary.
John Donovan.
Ned Sullivan.
Maurice McCarthy.
Bill Sutton.
John Jones.

The arms we had were two miniature rifles and twenty shot guns, with about 20 rounds for each, and ten pikes. The pikes had been made by Jack Cullinane, Blacksmith, Clonakilty. We had no revolvers or explosives. The shot guns were the property of members of the Company. No arms had been purchased. We had

one horse and car - a long dray belonging to Jim Walsh.

We marched to Dunmanway, had Mass and breakfast there, and met the Dunmanway Company. Both Companies then set out for Inchigeela under the command of Con Ahern. During a halt on the road Peadar O'Hourihan came from the Inchigeela direction, stopped and spoke to Jim Walsh. He had a motor cycle. I heard him say to Jim Walsh that things were looking blue. He went on before us into Inchigeela; I saw him there again later on. We got to Inchigeela about 3 o'clock. Two policemen from Dunmanway had accompanied us to Inchigeela. Michael McCarthy had bagpipes and played on the road.

Tomas MacCurtain and Terence MacSwiney met us at Inchigeela, and we were told the parade was cancelled and we were to return home. We marched back to Dunmanway and, as the night was very wet, stayed there until the next morning.

After returning to our own area we got no orders that I know of, but we kept alert and available during the week. In the following week the men named in Jim Walsh's statement were arrested. About a fortnight later James and William Meade and Con Mahony, Aichill, were arrested. No arms were got in the raids, and none surrendered.

There was no Battalion organisation in the area in 1916. The meeting at Ballinacarriga, referred to in Jim Walsh's statement, was held after 1916.

There were no I.R.B. or Fianna organisations in the district in 1916.

SIGNED: John Cahalane

DATE: Nov. 5th 1947

WITNESS: Florence Dowling

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