

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21
No. W.S. 122

ROINN  COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21
STATEMENT BY WITNESS
DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 122

Witness

Miss Elizabeth Anne O'Brien

Identity

Member of Tralee Branch Cumann na mBan

Subject

Cumann na mBan in Tralee from 1915-1916

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

File No. ... S. 775

Form B S M 2

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STATEMENT OF MISS ELIZABETH ANNE O'BRIEN
7, WALSH'S TERRACE, STRAND STREET, TRALEE,
CO. KERRY.

PERIOD: JANUARY 1915 TO EASTER 1916.

UNIT: TRALEE BRANCH, CUMANN-NA-mBHAN.

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The Tralee Branch of Cumann-na-mBhan was officially started at a meeting held in the Rink (Volunteer Headquarters) on 26th January, 1915. Miss McCarthy from Dublin, National Organiser, attended and spoke at the meeting. She was introduced by Tom Slattery, R.D.C., who presided. About sixty women and girls attended the meeting. Prior to that, five or six of us had been active since the formation of the Volunteers in giving them every assistance we could, such as catering for dances.

The following Committee was elected that night:-

Liz. Anne O'Brien.
Nellie Barry.
Nora O'Leary.
Mrs. Madden.
Mollie O'Brien.
Madge Kidney.
Nellie Hurley.
Kattie Barry.

The Committee met subsequently and appointed me President, Nellie Barry, Hon. Secretary, and Nora O'Leary, Hon. Treasurer. There was no change of Officers or Committee down to Easter, 1916.

The names of the others who became members at the start, as far as I can recall them, are:-

Ciss O'Connor.
Chrissie Foley. L.G. 97.
~~Christina Stokes~~
Hannagh Moriarty.
Kattie O'Brien.
Kathleen Kennedy.
Minnie Codd.
Mollie O'Donoghue.
Pauline Hassett.
Nellie Burke.
Nellie Commare.
May Doolin.
Kit Heffernan.
Katie Shea.
Susie Lisk.
Katie McMahon.
May Costello.
Mary Sullivan.
Una Moriarty.
Bunty Barrett.
Bridie Carr.
Maura Kidney.
Cissie Barry.
Mary Fleming.
Kathleen O'Brien.

Mollie O'Brien. L.G. 97.

Sara Shea.
 Nell Shea.
 Nan Tyndall.
 Miss O'Shea, N.T.
 M. Brosnan.

Nellie Reay
 Mollie Buckley
 Mairi Bunyan
 Lizzie Ware
 Essie Fitzgerald
 Babs Fitzgerald
 Nora Ahern
 Maggie Clifford
 Eily Hogan

There was no Cumann-na-mBhan organisation in the County outside Tralee when we started, but during 1915 we organised separate Branches at Oak Park, Carrahen, Barryroe, Farmers' Bridge, Ballymacelligott, Ardfert and Lixnaw. We started with about 40 members in Tralee and we had about 80 at Easter 1916.

Parades were held regularly twice a week at the Rink from the start up to Easter, 1916, either for drills or for classes. Drill instruction was given by Volunteer Officers. First aid classes and sewing classes were in constant operation. We made all the haversacks for the Tralee Volunteers; also a number of canvas bandoliers and a number of sleeping bags. We made thousands of green and gold ribbon badges and sold them. We ran dances, concerts and collections at Races and sports meetings, as well as carrying out a house to house collection in the town for the Volunteers. We did all the catering for the Volunteer dances. We held two bazaars, all the material for which we collected free in the town. Both of them were very successful and were the means of raising substantial funds. We had no uniforms before 1916; we did not consider them necessary.

We had at all times direct contact with Cumann-na-mBhan headquarters in Dublin, though we got very little actual assistance from them after the start. We worked on our own initiative trying to do the best we could to help the Volunteers in every way possible. There was always the closest co-operation and goodwill between the Volunteers and ourselves. Nellie Barry and I were the Tralee Branch delegates to the Cumann-na-mBhan Convention held in Dublin in October, 1915.

From Good Friday night, 1916, to Easter Sunday night we were very fully engaged in catering for the Volunteers in the Rink. Monteith was brought to the Rink on Good Friday night and Nellie Hurley bandaged his arm. We supplied meals for him and for the guard on the Rink that night and next day. On Easter Sunday we had at least 150 men to cater for. Many of them had come from Dingle and other outside places. We got in the dinners and made the teas ourselves in the Rink. The girls worked willingly and enthusiastically, and we were prepared to do our part in whatever happened that week.

SIGNED: Lizanne'Brien
 DATE: 4/5/48

WITNESS: Kathleen O'Brien

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