

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 562

ROINN



COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S.562.....

Witness

Liam Deasy,
47 Kimmage Road, West,
Terenure,
Dublin.

Identity.

Adjutant Cork III (West Cork) Brigade
1920-1921.

Subject.

Plans for the reception and distribution of arms
expected from Italy, 1920-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil.

File No. S.1489.....

Form B.S.M. 2

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

NO. W.S. 562

**STATEMENT BY LIAM DEASY
RE PROJECTED PURCHASE OF ARMS IN ITALY :
1920-1921.**

It was in December, 1920, when I was Adjutant, Cork III Brigade, that I received orders to proceed to Dublin in connection with this matter. I left West Cork and cycled to Cork City. It must have been about Saturday, the 11th December, for I remember the ruins of the burnt portion of the City were still smouldering. I travelled to Dublin by train along with Florrie O'Donoghue, Adjutant, Cork I Brigade.

In Dublin we attended a Meeting at Barry's Hotel, Gardiner's Row, at which were present Mick Collins, Cathal Brugha, Liam Mellows and, I think, Joe Vize. It was explained to us that negotiations were proceeding for the purchase and transhipment of arms from Italy - I am not sure of the number mentioned. We were asked to get an Officer of seafaring experience who could pilot the ship to a West Cork port. Florrie O'Donoghue suggested Michael Leahy, then Vice O.C. Cork I Brigade. It was decided that he would proceed to Italy and return with the Arms Ship for the purpose of piloting her to a selected landing place in West Cork.

Before proceeding to Dublin our Brigade Staff had decided to suggest Myross Strand and I had found myself studying the coastline with its many inlets, harbours, bays and beaches for a suitable landing place for the expected cargo of arms. Almost due south of Union Hall to the west of the entrance to Glandore Harbour is Myross and the sandy beach there is screened from the open sea by Rabbit Island. This island was then inhabited by one family who were named O'Driscoll and were friendly to the National cause.

The plan was to send the arms to North Cork and Limerick for distribution through the country, but in the event of the enemy intervening, Cork III Brigade was to have ample dumps opened near the proposed landing place. It was our job to find the most suitable spot to beach the ship and land the arms, arrange for transport, for dumps and for eventual handing over to Units of our own and other Brigade Areas of the guns and ammunition. I remember when the meeting was over Collins telling us of the intervention by Archbishop Clune of Perth, Australia, to bring about an end to the fighting in Ireland and that a truce had been almost agreed to when on Sir Neville McCreeady, G.O.C., British Forces in Ireland, being approached by Lloyd George, the British Premier, he (McCreeady) turned down the project and asked for just three months more which was all he would want "to clear up the mess".

With McCreeady's mind set in this way, we had to carry on with our project and so, on returning from Dublin, and back in West Cork, I was brought out in a motor boat round the Islands by Pat O'Driscoll, then Captain of Myross Company and now living at Bawnlahan, Union Hall, and noted the channel between the mainland and the islands was some hundreds of yards wide at high tide. It was considered that when Mick Leahy would pilot in the Arms Ship it should be beached and consideration was then given to the provision of transport, assembly of same in the neighbourhood,

routes of departure to collecting points by units or, alternatively, to prepared dumps in the area, of which some hundred would have to be provided, mainly in the local Company area. It was also taken into account what protection would be required, covering parties during the ship's approach, to the landing of the arms and escorts for the transport proceeding inland. However, in the long run the ship did not leave Genoa.

Signed: _____

Liam Deasy.

Witnessed: _____

[Signature], Lt Col.

Date: _____

1st August 1951

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21
No. W.S. *562*