

W.S. 974

**ORIGINAL**

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRE MILE TA 1913-21
No. W.S. 974

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21  
**STATEMENT BY WITNESS.**

**DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 974**

**Witness**

William Walsh,  
 Kalipadogue,  
 Tarbert,  
 Co. Kerry.  
**Identity.**

Member of Irish Volunteers, Tarbert, Co. Kerry,  
 1914 - ;

Second Lieut. same Coy. 1920.  
**Subject.**

National activities, Tarbert, Co. Kerry,  
 1914-1921.

**Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.**

Nil

File No. S. 2290

Form B S M 2

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STATEMENT OF WILLIAM WALSH,  
Kalilpadogue, Tarbert.

I was born in Kalilpadogue, Tarbert, in 1894. My father was a small farmer and he sent me to the National School in Tarbert until I was about 14 years of age. I then left school and started to work on my father's farm.

The Volunteers were first formed here in Tarbert in June 1914. I was one of the first who joined. Two ex-British soldiers named Gerald O'Sullivan and John Donovan were in charge. Soon after the Volunteers were formed, a collection was made through the parish to buy rifles. We collected in all £50 and bought eleven rifles. Some were Lee Enfield and some were "Martin Henrys". These rifles came from Dublin; they were landed at Howth. After John Redmond's speech pledging that the Volunteers would defend the coasts of Ireland, there was a split in the Company and the whole Company broke up. There was no Company here before Easter Week, 1916.

In 1917 a Sinn Fein club was formed here. Two men named Tom Fitzgerald and Maurice Holly (brother-in-law of Con Colbert) were responsible for forming the club. There were about 30 or 40 members at first and I was one of the first to join.

It was in summer of 1917 that the Volunteers were reorganised here; it was Jim Sugrue and Paddy Landers of Listowel that reorganised them. Tom Fitzgerald was made the Company Captain and Pat Dillane was Lieutenant. There were 30 or 40 men in the Company at first. All that year we drilled and had parades.

In 1918 there was a lot of talk about Conscription. We still drilled and had parades, and we got about 120 extra men into the Company.

When Conscription was over all those men left the Company and attended no more parades.

In 1919 Tom Fitzgerald, the Company Captain, was arrested for drilling the Volunteers. He was sentenced to a month in Belfast gaol. Pat Dillane took his place as Company Captain and held the rank for some time afterwards. At the end of this year I took part with the other men in the Company collecting shotguns in the area.

All this time we had the eleven rifles that we bought before the split in 1914. But early in 1920 we gave two of them to the I.R.A. men who raided the R.I.C. hut at Gortalea. We gave another four to the Newtownsandes Company just before the I.R.A. attack on Ballyunion Barracks in February 1920. Paddy Cahill, O.C. Brigade, Tralee, got the other five in January, 1921 when the Flying Column was formed for North Kerry.

On the 20th May, 1920 myself and 19 other men of the Company held a meeting about a half mile outside the town. The meeting was attended by Jim Sugrue, Paddy Dalton (killed at Gurtaglanna) and Michael O'Brien of the Battalion Staff from Listowel. They told us that the meeting was called to form a centre of the I.R.B. and that we would have to keep our mouths shut. We were regarded as twenty men who could be depended upon to carry out all orders transmitted to the Company Captain by the Battalion O.C. We were handed slips of paper and told to write down the names of the men we wanted to be officers of the Company. The result was that Tom Enright was appointed Captain, Ted Enright 1st Lieutenant and myself 2nd Lieutenant. Jim Sugrue, the Battalion O.C., then issued instructions to the newly appointed Company Captain that all roads in the area were to be trenched and that trees adjacent to public roads were to be felled to prevent the passage of R.I.C. and military lorries from place to place.

The Tans came to Tarbert in September, 1920. Between Tans and R.I.C. there were thirteen men altogether in Tarbert R.I.C. Barracks and about fifty military on Tarbert Island, a half a mile away. We kept trenching and cutting the roads all that year.

Due to the inactivity of the Company officers appointed on the 20th May, 1920, the Battalion O.C., Jim Sugrue, early in 1921 ordered that elections be held for the appointment of new officers for the Company. The result of these elections was that Paddy Curnane - now in the U.S.A. - was appointed Captain, William Egan 1st Lieutenant and I remained 2nd Lieutenant.

The Flying Column for North Kerry was formed about this time but there was no one from this Company selected for the Column. The reason was that the Brigade O.C., Paddy Cahill of Tralee, said at the time that there were too many men on the run and in the Column without arms to permit taking anyone from Tarbert.

In April of this year the Column came into Tarbert and attacked a patrol of R.I.C. and Tans in the town. It was the section of the Company to the south of the town that acted as scouts for the Column. This was the section nearest to Newtownsandies from whence the Column had arrived. I had nothing to do with the attack and only heard about it when it was over. I heard, however, that as four or five Tans were leaving a public house, they were fired on by the men of the Column who had taken up positions near the public house and that one of these Tans was wounded.

The only thing the Company did up to the Truce was to cut and trench roads. One night about a month after the first attack the Column arrived again in the town from Newtownsandies. It was the same section to the south of the town that acted as scouts. Again I did not hear of the attack until it was over. The attack was

something similar to the previous one. The Column opened fire on two or three Tans as they were leaving a public house. The Tans succeeded in reaching the barracks and from the barracks opened fire which was kept up for about an hour.

On the 10th July the Column arrived in Tarbert once more. Two men, Dannie Connell and James Carrig, from the section to the west of the town which is the one nearest to Ballylongford, acted as scouts. There were only two or three revolver shots altogether fired at the Tans as they left their usual public house. On this occasion two Tans were wounded.

During the Truce I went to Sallyglen training camp for 14 days. Paddy Joe McElligott was Camp O.C., Brian Grady was Adjutant, Ned Kissane gave lectures. Paddy Neville of Ennismore was the Instructor.

(Signed)

William Walsh

(William Walsh)

Date:

12th July 1954

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Witness:

John J. Daly

(John J. Daly)

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