

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY

NO. W.S. 995

ROINN



COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 995

Witness

Major General Eamon Price,
Lios na Fairrge,
Laytown,
Co. Meath.

Identity.

Captain 'C' Company, 2nd Battalion,
Dublin Brigade, 1916;
Director of Organisation, 1920-1921.

Subject.

- (a) Formation of Irish Volunteers, Dublin, 1913;
- (b) Surrender of Irish Garrison, Jacob's Factory,
Easter Week 1916.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. S.552

Form B.S.M. 2

ORIGINAL

KINCORA,
25, ST LAWRENCE ROAD,
CLONTARF,
DUBLIN.

9 Manor Villas
Laytown
Co Meath.

25. August 1954

Following representations made to him by
the Director and other representatives of the
Bureau of Military History, my late husband
Major General Canon Price, started to set
down his experiences in the war of
Independence 1913-1921, as well as notes
on the earlier developments which led
to the emergence of that movement.

unfortunately he died in April
May 1951
before he could finish this record, and
the attached sheets, in his own hand.

BUREAU MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
B.P. STAIRS (1913-21)
No. W.S. 995

KINCORA,
25, ST LAWRENCE ROAD,
CLONTARF,
DUBLIN.

writing, as all that exist.

The note in brackets on the last
sheet:

Excerpt from memoirs of Major General
Price husband of Marie Mc Shuibhlaigh
arises from the fact that my husband
intended the notation of the statement
to which that note is appended, to serve
as part of his memoirs which were
to be published at some later date.

The attached notes and statements
are all in his own handwriting,
and I willingly present them to the
Bureau for preservation Marie Price (Mc Shuibhlaigh)

Witness: W. J. [Signature] Director of the Bureau of Military History
1913. 21

9 Marian Villas,

Laytown,

Co. Meath.

25 August, 1954.

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"Excerpt from memoirs of Major General Price

"husband of Maire Nic Shiubhlaigh"

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The attached notes and statements are all in his own handwriting and I willingly present them to the Bureau for preservation.

(Signed) Maire Price (Nic Shiubhlaigh).

Witness: - (Signed) M. McDunphy,
Director of the Bureau of Military History.
1913-21.

NOTES.

Influences which led to rise of Volunteers

- (a) Interregnum in politics after Parnell's death which led to lack of interest in Westminster.
- (b) The Boer War and the pro-Boer and inter British relations.
- (c) The influence of the I.R.B. & Sinn Féin.
- (d) The Gaelic League and Abbey Theatre.

Immediate cause:

The failure of Parliamentary action.

The ineptitude of the Irish Parliamentary Party.

The disappointment in the Home Rule Bill.

STATEMENT .

In presenting the following details of my connection with the events of the Anglo-Irish War of 1913 to 1921 I have to rely altogether on memory as I have no documents at my disposal nor, removed as I am from Dublin, can I refer to sources of information available in the National Library or by consultation with others.

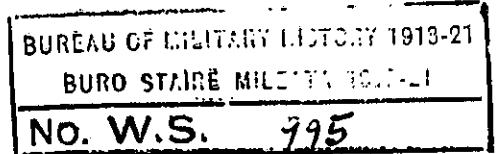
As a commencement may I give my personal views upon the influences which led to the establishment of Ógláigh na h-Éireann and the chain of events which culminated with the Truce.

- (a) The state of political calm and if one may say so passivity of the Irish People after the death of Parnell. I do not refer to the internecine quarrels about leadership that ensued and which after all were ephemeral.
- (b) The effect of the Boer War on the relations of the Irish People and Britain and the patriotic uprising in connection with the '98 celebrations.
- (c) The comparative cessation of land agitation after the 1891, 1896 and 1903 Land Acts.
- (d) The influence of the I.R.B. which maintained itself surreptitiously and potently during all those years.
- (e) The establishment of the Gaelic League in 1893 and the effect it had of turning the people's mind inwards towards Ireland's Language and history.
- (f) The establishment of Ingheana na h-Eireann by Maud Gonne in 1900 which was the fore-runner of Cumann na mBan.

- (g) The rise of Sinn Fein and Griffith's and Rooney's preaching of self-dependence.
- (h) The establishment of Fianna na h-Eireann in 1909 by the Countess Markievicz.
- (i) The 1913 Strike with the formation of the Irish Citizen Army early in 1913.
- (k) The formation of the Ulster Volunteers in 1913 to oppose with force the granting of Home Rule.

I was born on October 10th. 1891, the day I believe of Parnell's funeral. I was the eldest of the family and my people poor. We had a strong fight with poverty and in an endeavour to maintain a decent air of respectability. I was pretty bright at school and my parents struggled to keep me at school. I responded and studied hard, entering the Civil Service at 16½ working assiduously until by open examination I attained the position of Clerk in the High Courts of Justice. I was then in my 21st year and having reached the zenith of my ambition in the Civil Service I decided to rest and take a little part in the outside world. Up to this, though not deeply interested in the political world, I was keenly absorbed in Irish history and read with avidity all books relating to this country. My teachers, too, the Christian Brothers, ably helped in this and if any tribute for our present international status, it is surely due to that unselfish band of men who with such devotion showed the young people of this nation, how Irishmen should live and die for their country. Add to that home influence. My parents were staunch nationalists and I remember with pleasure how my father on Sunday around Dublin would lead me to the historic spots and relate the deeds of glory of the past and so the seed was sown. That, however, did not make me a revolutionary. Far from it I did not

believe in physical force as a weapon. The failures of '98, '48 and '67 had impressed themselves too deeply upon my mind to permit me to indulge in such wild dreams, however pleasant, as the overthrow of Britain's might by force. I remember arguing very strongly against such a course with my bosom companions, particularly on the question of foreign aid such as that of Germany, then deemed most likely to be at war with England. I was even opposed to the policy of Sinn Fein. The support of Irish Industries etc. and all that it connotes was of course acceptable but the policy of passive resistance seemed impossible particularly for the Irish People who, in my opinion, of their very temperament unfitted for it.



of Garrison 1916
The Surrender ~~at~~ Jacob's Factory.

It was Low Sunday. The sound of heavy guns, machine gun staccato and the crack of the rifle had gradually died down the previous day and Saturday night had been unnaturally quiet. It was obvious that the struggle in Dublin was finished. Tomas MacDonagh had left with a Capuchin priest under a flag of Truce to meet Pearse and to consult with Eamon Kent.

On his return he summoned all officers to the Staff room. A silent company awaited his report. Major MacBride sat calmly beside him at a table. Tomas announced that Pearse had surrendered and had issued an order to all units to do likewise. He read the order pointing out that we were not bound to obey orders from a prisoner. He solicited the views of those present as to the most desirable course to be pursued.

Each officer spoke up in turn and though some were in favour of fighting it out the majority counselled obedience to the order. Outstanding amongst the former was, I remember, Séamus Hughes. He delivered a fiery speech, pointing out that by surrender we would, in fact, be offering our leaders as a sacrifice and that it were better to die with guns in our hands than to face the firing squad. On the other hand Micheál O'Hanrahan in his slow, calm and reasoned tone advised surrender.

Personally I supported Micheál. By holding out in Jacobs we were inviting the destruction of the factory by incendiary shells and not merely the factory but of the surrounding thickly populated area. If we left Jacobs we could only reach the country in twos and threes and our prospects of getting together again were well-nigh hopeless.

MacDonagh listened carefully and then summed up. His voice shook as he spoke and finally with tears in his eyes broke down, crying "Boys, we must give in. We must leave some to carry on the struggle". It was a poignant moment and one to remain indelibly in the ^{memories} memory of those present.

We were ordered to convey the decision to our men and to make the necessary arrangements for evacuation. When the garrison was assembled on the ground floor there was a scene of incredible pandemonium and confusion. Men, old in the movement, seeing their dearest hopes dashed to the ground became hysterical weeping openly, breaking their rifles against the walls. Others took things more quietly but grimly prepared for the inevitable. I advised the very young lads and the older married men with dependent children who were not in uniform to try to get away. I must say that not all took that course but stuck manfully to their officers.

In these chaotic conditions Tomás instructed me to take charge in marshalling the garrison and advancing it to the place of surrender. With some difficulty I succeeded in doing this and leaving in file by a narrow door we proceeded to New Bride Street, I think. Here we lined up between cordons of British soldiers blocking each end of the street.

A British officer approached me and requested me to arrange for the men to lay down their arms. I recognised the officer. He was the son of a Judge and a barrister in Civil life and I had occasion to do business with him in my capacity as clerk in the High Courts. He recognised me likewise and to a certain extent our relations were friendly and courteous. By a series of parade-ground manoeuvres, the arms were laid down and the men formed up in column of route. I was really proud of my Volunteers then. All their movements were carried out without a hitch and proved a credit to their training particularly under such adverse conditions.

During all this time MacDonagh and MacBride with some staff officers stood aside and in the order of march took their places at the head. The British supplied an advance guard, a rear guard and lines of side guards.

Thus surrounded we started off taking as our route Dame Street, Lord Edward Street, Thomas Street, past St. Catherine's Church, along the Via Dolorosa of so many Irish hopes and aspirations, to Richmond Barracks, from which some were to leave for execution, the others for prison ex. etc. We still had MacDonagh's parting words ringing in our ears "We must leave some to carry on the fight".

(Excerpt from memoirs of Major General Price husband of Maire Nic Shiubhlaigh).

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BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21
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