

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 1,078

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1,078.....

Witness

Edward Dolan,  
7 Shanganagh Road,  
Drumcondra,  
Dublin.

Identity.

Member of 'G' Company 1st Battalion  
Dublin Brigade, 1914 - ;

Member of 'C' Company do. later.

Subject.

- (a) Howth Gun-Running, July 1914;
- (b) Storage of arms 1919-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. S. 2404.....

Form B.S.M. 2

S. 1,078

ORIGINAL

W.S. 1078  
BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21  
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STATEMENT BY MR. EDWARD DOLAN,

7, Shanganagh Road, Drumcondra, Dublin.

I joined G. Company, Irish National Volunteers, in the latter part of 1913 or early 1914. The Company had its headquarters at a house in Claude Road, off Whitworth Road, Drumcondra.

I attended the usual weekly parades and was mobilised in July, 1914, to parade in the Father Mathew Park, Fairview, for the march to Howth, with other units of the Dublin Volunteers, to collect rifles which were to be landed there from a yacht which was expected to arrive from a foreign port.

When we arrived in Howth, we were halted on the Harbour road and signallers, with flags, were posted on the pier wall to warn us when the yacht was sighted. When the yacht arrived, it moored at the East Pier under the lighthouse, and the ~~standing~~ <sup>LEADING</sup> companies of the Volunteers proceeded down the pier to the yacht and commenced to unload the arms. At the same time, the remaining companies were halted half-way down and ordered to clear it of all civilians. An attempt was made by the local coastguards to prevent the landing of the arms but, as they were outnumbered, their efforts to do so were futile.

As soon as all the arms had been landed and each man armed, the Brigade assembled and fell in for the return march to Dublin. Everything went well and we all felt that no opposition would be encountered on the way to the city. However, when we got to Kilbarrack and had just fallen out for a rest, we saw a number of trams

approaching from the city, loaded with members of the Dublin Metropolitan Police. When the trams reached Kilbarrack, the greater number of the D.M.P. got off and the remainder continued their journey towards Howth. When we resumed the march to the city, the D.M.P. fell in behind us and followed us towards the city.

On approaching Fairview by way of the Howth Road, we noticed soldiers of the British army barring our entry to the city by that route, and we then wheeled right into Charlemont Road, with a view to getting on to Malahide Road. When we reached the junction of the two roads, we found the way barred by more British soldiers.

We halted, facing the soldiers, and, after some short time, a parley took place between the officers on both sides in a lane beside Maguire's public house on Malahide Road. While this parley was taking place, we were ordered to disperse and take our rifles with us.

I, with four other Volunteers, crossed into what was then Marino woods, eventually arriving at the back wall of St. Vincent's convent on Richmond Road. We crossed the wall into the convent grounds and emerged on Richmond Road near Noonan's shop. One of our party was known to the Noonan's and, when he had told them of the events at Howth and the incidents which followed, they gave us permission to hide our rifles in an outhouse attached to the premises. When things had quietened down, we returned some hours later, got our rifles and succeeded in bringing them to our homes.

I continued to attend the usual weekly parades, but, shortly after the outbreak of the European War in August, 1914, the split in the Volunteer movement came about, and I

remained with the Redmondite section. I still retained my Howth rifle. As I was not attached to any unit of the separatist section of the Volunteers, I did not take part in the Rising.

Some time in the latter part of 1916, I joined the remnants of the Hibernian Rifles at the headquarters of the Ancient Order of Hibernians (Clan na Gael), 28 North Frederick Street. On the anniversary of the Rising in Easter 1917, I was mobilised and remained on duty that night in North Frederick Street. I assisted in the posting up of copies of the 1916 Proclamation and the erection of the Tricolour on the roof of No. 28. Later, I brought my Howth rifle to North Frederick Street and also collected another from Donaghy's of Old Kilmainham, both of which we used for drilling and aiming practices. From August, 1916, to June, 1917, I remained a member of the Hibernian Rifles and took part in the usual propagandist activities of the time. These were mainly of a political nature, such as, the dissemination of political literature, organising national concerts at the Mansion House and the Foresters Hall and attending funerals of the deceased members of the Volunteer movement.

In or about June, 1917, I joined C. Company, 1st Battalion, Dublin Brigade, then commanded by Captain Seán Flood who, as well as being my commanding officer, was also my constant companion.

For some time after joining C. Company, I was detailed to call weekly to Michael Collins' office in Exchequer Street for written orders for the Company Commander. On another occasion I was sent with Tommy McGrane, a member of C. Company, to Phil Shanahan's public

house in Foley Street to purchase a rifle from a deserter from the British army. The purchase was being arranged by Paddy Hughes, also a C. Company member, and a Corporation employee. While waiting in Shanahan's, the deserter was spotted by two Red Caps (British military police) who chased him through the public house. The rifle had, however, been handed over to Hughes who, in turn, passed it to me. It was a long Ross rifle and projected quite a lot below the hem of my overcoat, but we managed (McGrane and I) to get it safely to his (McGrane's) house in Middle Gardiner Street.

On the death of Thomas Ashe, from the effects of his hunger-strike, on the 25th September, 1917, I was sent to Mountjoy Jail to keep it under observation. I remained on duty there until relieved the following morning at 4 a.m.. During this time, Ashe was lying in state in the City Hall. On the morning of the funeral, I was sent by my Company Commander, Seán Flood, to Shiel's provision shop in Moore Street where I collected two rifles from Peadar Ledwith, a C. Company member who was employed there. These rifles were required to complete the armament for the firing party attending Ashe's funeral.

In preparation for the 1918 general election and acting under Company orders, I devoted much of my time to clerical work, canvassing and policing of public meetings and committee rooms connected with the election. I was also engaged on police work at Croke Park on the occasions of matches there, and house-to-house canvassing in connection with the sale of Republican bonds. From the latter half of 1917 to the conscription crisis in April, 1918, I attended engineering classes in Blackhall Place (Battalion Headquarters) which were conducted by Liam Archer. On

the eve of the passing of the Conscription Bill by the British Parliament, I was ordered back to my Company and placed in charge of a section of new recruits, to train them the rudiments of foot and arms drill. In addition, I was on constant patrol and observation duty. At this stage, I was promoted to the rank of Section Commander and, some short time later, I was sent to a camp at Ticknock for specialist military training.

Early in 1919 I was asked by my Company officer if I would be prepared to concentrate all my activities in the transferring of and temporary storing of arms. I volunteered for the work and was taken by the Quartermaster, John Lyons, to Neary's second-hand clothes shop in Mary's Lane, off Capel Street, and fitted out with a particularly long overcoat which I was to wear to hide the arms beneath it when moving them from one dump to another.

I made numerous transfers of arms with this coat, only some of which I can now recall, and I am a bit mixed up as to dates. I can, however, recall three or four visits to Frank Harding's of Christchurch Place and, on one occasion, taking two rifles from there to my home in Phibsboro'. As I was unaccompanied by an armed escort, as was customary at the time, I was not at all comfortable on the trip.

Following the raid on the King's Inns, Henrietta Street, in June, 1920, I was mobilised that night and met Seán Flood, Company Commander, in Mark Wilson's billiard saloon in North Frederick Street. (Mark also was a member of C. Company, 1st Battalion, and took part in the Rising in the Four Courts area in 1916.) With Seán Flood and other Volunteers, I went to a stable at the rere of Parnell Square where, after some time, a horse-drawn cab came in

and disgorged a load of rifles. I was one of those detailed to transfer the rifles to a selected dump and was given Frank Carbury as an armed escort. I transferred six rifles, making three trips with two rifles each time, to the rear of Lyons' pawn office, Dorset Street, where I handed them over to Paddy Swan, a member of C. Company.

Shortly after, while on parade in the Tara Hall, Gloucester Street, the Company was visited by Commandant Tom Byrne and, on his instructions, I was sent with some others to 41, Parnell Square, where we were met by Liam Tobin. He sent us in, one at a time, to an assembly of "brass hats", including Mick Collins, Dick Mulcahy, Dermot O'Hegarty, Cathal Brugha and others. I was interrogated at length by Mick Collins as to my place of business, hours on and off, and as to my associates generally. On conclusion of my interrogation, I was told by Mick Collins that, in addition to my every-day Volunteer duties, I was to carry out any orders given to me by Liam Tobin or Peadar Clancy. About this time, I was appointed Company Intelligence officer and supplied with a book, with numerous headings under which I was to record information of a military nature gleaned by myself or any other member of the Company. Such information I was to bring to Peadar Clancy at the Republican Outfitters (a drapery shop) in Talbot Street. My last report was left there on the Friday evening prior to Peadar's capture.

While the big hunger-strike was on in Mountjoy Jail, I was picked up by Liam Tobin and, together with Joe McDonagh and John S. O'Connor, sent to Mick Collins' office on Parnell Square. He gave us a list of names of men on the run or wanted by the British, who were then staying in the Camden Street area. He instructed us to tell them

not to stay at home that night, as a round-up by the Castle authorities in that area was anticipated. He told us to take some bicycles which were outside and get going, and make sure the list; which he gave us, was not captured by the British. It was after curfew by the time we got through but we did not succeed in contacting all the people whose names were on the list. Simon Donnelly undertook to do the remainder.

On another occasion, Liam Tobin called on me at my place of business (Donnelly's coal merchants, Westmoreland Street) where I was employed, and told me to be ready for a call to go to Rathmines with an 'order?' from Dublin Castle for collection of arms at an address to be supplied later. This did not come off - at least, I was not called.

Towards the end of 1920, my employers sent me travelling in the country for orders and collecting accounts. I reported this fact to my Company Commander, Seán Flood, and was given leave of absence, he saying that possibly some jobs could be fitted in with my travelling.

In December, 1920, my home, 3 Villa Bank, Royal Canal, Phibsboro', was raided on two occasions by British forces during my absence.

I got married in February, 1921, and went to live in Howth, at the same time carrying out my daily work as a traveller, collecting orders and accounts, and doing intelligence work for the movement.

SIGNED: Edward Dolan (Edward Dolan)

DATE: 7<sup>th</sup> July 1955.

WITNESS: Mr. F. Ryan Condit  
(M.F. RYAN)

