

W.S. 1,349
ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURÓ STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21
No. W.S. 1,349

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1,349

Witness

Daniel Conway,
Rathcahill,
Monegay,
Co. Limerick.

Identity.

Captain Monegay Company Irish Vol's.
Co. Limerick, 1914 - ;

Subject.

Monegay Company Irish Volunteers,
Co. Limerick, 1914-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. S. 2633

Form B.S.M. 2

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BURD STAIRS MILENTA 1913-21	
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STATEMENT BY DANIEL CONWAY,

Rathcahill, Moneygay, Co. Limerick.

I was born in the parish of Moneygay in July, 1885, and attended the local national school until I was fourteen years of age. When I left school I went to work on my father's farm. By general consent a company of Volunteers was formed in the parish in the year 1914. I was one of the first to join. Two ex-British soldiers named O'Connor and Kelly were our drill instructors. Our strength was 40 men. We drilled with wooden guns at the time. A collection was made in the parish for funds to purchase arms. A sum of £80 was collected. We only managed to purchase two rifles.

In October, 1915, following the split caused by John Redmond, Ernest Blythe visited the area and reorganised the company. His chief supporters were Dan Collins and Jack Collins, brother of Con Collins, Dan Ronan, Daniel Begley, Timothy Shanahan, Fr. Edmond Clifford and myself. We numbered 35 men and proceeded to drill and hold route marches once again.

Early in 1916 I was elected Company Captain; Dan Collins, 1st Lt.; Jack Collins, 2nd Lt.; Tom Casey and Jer. Kiely became Section Leaders. Led by Ernest Blythe, we marched to Templeglantine, Ardagh, Killeedy and other places where we helped to organise Volunteer companies. About the month of February we paraded at the chapel gate and called on Fr. Coleman, acting treasurer of the Volunteer funds, for the £80 collected for the purchase of rifles and the two rifles already purchased. He gave us part of the £80 but no rifles; he may not have had the rifles.

On the 17th March, 1916, Seán McDermott addressed a mobilisation of Volunteers in Moneygay and stayed that night at the residence of the Collins brothers.

On the instructions of Captain McInerney of Limerick City, or Con Collins, which I received on Easter Sunday morning, 1916, through Con Collins's brother - Dan Collins - I marched the company to Glenquinn Castle. I was ordered to bring all arms in our possession and to make sure that each man carried a full day's rations. Our arms consisted of thirty shotguns and a number of pikes. Dan Collins was 2nd in command of the company that day. I had been told that there was a possibility of a rising and that the reason for assembling at Glenquinn was to await instructions from our headquarters in Dublin.

During the day we did some field exercises with other companies and heard rumours that we were to be supplied with rifles, but we had no idea where they were coming from. As no instructions or rifles had been received by about 8 p.m. we were dismissed and returned home. On Monday morning of Easter Week I had become aware through the Collins brothers that the rising was definite, so I mobilised the company and addressed them, saying that we would be in action against the British garrison in a day or two. Six hundred rounds of shotgun cartridges were distributed among the company the same day. By Tuesday we heard of the arrest of Con Collins, Austin Stack and Roger Casement in Tralee and of the sinking of a shipload of arms off the Kerry coast. We waited throughout the week for some news or instructions from headquarters, but none came. We did hear of the fighting in Dublin and rumours to the effect that the Volunteers were fighting elsewhere.

After the surrender in Dublin we held a meeting, at which it was decided to bury our arms, but on the advice of the Parish Priest - Fr. Clifford - we surrendered them to the local R.I.C. barracks after breaking them.

After this we still continued to meet and organise up to about June, 1917, when the general release took place. In this month, headed by the local fife and drum band, I brought the company to Rathkeale to meet Con Collins and Dr. Hayes. The procession which followed was three miles long. There were several hundred horse-drawn cars, each of which carried a green, white and orange flag. Several other contingents with bands arrived in Rathkeale for the welcome home to Con Collins and Dr. Hayes. Thomas Ashe was present on the platform the same day. The meeting was addressed by Con Collins and Dr. Hayes, as well as Thomas Ashe, Dan Ronan, myself and others. When the meeting was over Thomas Ashe accompanied the Collins brothers to Moneygay and stayed in their house that night.

A short time after the Rathkeale meeting a general mobilisation of all Volunteers in West Limerick was held near Newcastlewest at a place known as The Crooked Tree where four Fenians were hanged in 1821 for the shooting of a landlord named Haskins in the same year. All men of the West Limerick Brigade were present. The meeting was addressed by Fr. Wall and Fr. Hayes. That night Garrett McAuliffe, Battalion Officer of Newcastlewest, was arrested by the R.I.C. Next day Dan Collins was arrested. They were both taken to Belfast jail, where they were detained for some months.

On a Saturday in September, 1917, Countess Markievicz addressed a meeting in Lachford's theatre, Newcastlewest. The Moneygay Company acted as her escort on the occasion. Next day she addressed a meeting in Kilmallock. On the same Sunday Mr. de Valera attended a large meeting in the G.A.A. field, which he addressed for some time. He had spoken in Kilmallock the day before. He was presented with an address of welcome by the then Rural District Council. The Moneygay Company acted as his bodyguard. From then to the spring of 1918 we had routine parades and route marches.

During the conscription scare the membership of the company increased by 40 men. Protest meetings were held at the church gates. These meetings were addressed by Fr. Ruddle, C.C., now Parish Priest of Ardagh, and other speakers. We collected some shotguns at the time. When the scare was over most of the new men left, which reduced our strength to 50.

Shortly after I got married and resigned as Captain of the Company and was replaced by Ger. Kiely. I continued as an ordinary member of the company right up to the Truce and took part in the routine activities, such as drilling, blocking roads, collecting shotguns and carrying dispatches. Just prior to the Truce an officer from G.H.Q. known locally as Captain Hand stayed at my house for some time. Three days before the Truce, with other members of the Moneygay Company, we reported to the Brigade O/C, Garrett McAuliffe, at Banna for a proposed attack on an envoy of R.I.C. and Black and Tans there by the West Limerick Flying Column assisted by a North Cork Column. The attack did not take place.

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Signed: Daniel Conway
 (Daniel Conway)
 Date: 13/2/56
 13/2/56.

Witness: John J. Daly (John J. Daly)
 (Investigator)