

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21

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ROINN COSANTA.

BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21

(Bureau of Military History 1913-21),

26 RAEDH NA NIARTHÁRACH,
(26 Westland Row),

BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH.
(Dublin).

DOCUMENT W. S. 10.

Statement by

JOHN WALSH,
Willsgrove,
Enniskeane,
Co. Cork.

dated 30 August, 1947,

on

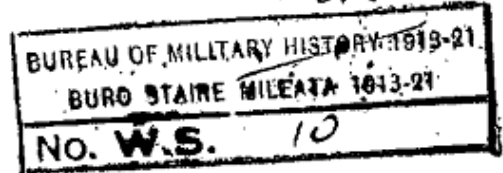
Aiohill Company I.V., Co. Cork,

1914 - 1916.

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ORIGINAL



STATEMENT OF JOHN WALSH,
WILSGROVE, ENNISKEANE, CO. CORK.

PERIOD: 1914 to EASTER, 1916.

UNIT: AIOHILL COMPANY, I.V.

The Aiohill Company of the Irish Volunteers was started about March, 1915. Previous to that there had been no Volunteer organisation in the area. I had been a Volunteer since 1914, and had paraded with the Clogough Company up to the time our own Company was started. I was at a parade in Cork with Clogough Company in 1914 or early 1915, and I was the only man there from that district.

On a Sunday in March, 1915, the Clogough and Ballinadee Companies came on a march to Aiohill and the Company here was formed that day. Terence MacSwiney and a man named Brown from Cork were present that day and addressed the recruits.

On the following Sunday the Cork Volunteers had a parade to Kilmurray. They held a meeting at Bealnablath and four of us from Aiohill Company - John Walsh, Keel, Charles McCarthy, Con O'Mahony and myself - went to meet them at Bealnablath by Terence MacSwiney's orders. After that the Company held parades two or three nights a week and marches on Sundays. Two of the night parades were held in Ballineen and Enniskeane. Sunday parades were to neighbouring places, such as Ballygurteen and Lyre. Some of the Sunday parades were to more distant places. We went to Timoleague, Leslevane and Grange on a route march one Sunday, getting first Mass in Timoleague. Another Sunday there was a big parade at Clonakilty and exercises afterwards at Ardfield. We went by train from Ballinascorthy to Clonakilty and afterwards marched to Ardfield. The Ballinadee, Lyre and Clogough Companies took part in this. The people of Clonakilty were very hostile at this time, and bottles were thrown at us. There were no Volunteers in Clonakilty. We had several night parades to Lyre, and the Lyre Company frequently came over here and joined in our week-night parades. We also did a Sunday route march to Kilbrittan, in which the Ballinadee and Clogough Companies took part.

One of the main objects of these Sunday parades was recruiting for the Volunteers in the districts we visited. Police always travelled with us on these parades on foot. Sometimes the march was too long for the policemen and they got fed up and went home.

The normal equipment of the men in the Company consisted of belts, bandoliers, caps, puttees and haversacks. We paid 3d per week per man into a fund for the purchase of this equipment. There were no rifles in the Company up to Easter, 1916. We had three air guns and ten or twelve shot guns, the property of the individual men. There was a good supply of shot gun cartridges, and about 100 rounds of these had been filled with buckshot at Wilsgrrove.

The orders for Easter, 1916, came to us from Ballinadee, but I do not remember how they came or who gave them. They were to the effect that we were to march to Macroom on Easter Sunday, leaving here at dawn, and bring all arms, ammunition and equipment and two days' rations. We did not know where we were to go beyond that, and we had no information that this was anything more than an ordinary exercise. The order must have come from Tom Hales, as it was usual for orders to come to us from Ballinadee through Clogough Company. We had no direct communication with Cork.

At one o'clock on Easter Saturday that order was cancelled by Eugene Walsh, the Captain of Clogough Company, who came to me. He and most of his Company were at Confession at Aichill. He asked me why we had not gone to Confession and I said we did not think there was any need for it as we were not going into war. I do not know if Eugene Walsh had got this cancellation order from Tom Hales or from anywhere else, but the order never went to Lyre Company and Walsh did not give any instructions to have it sent on to Lyre. The result was that Lyre marched on Easter Sunday and we did not. We were to meet on Easter Saturday night and we did meet. I reported to the Company Captain, Con O'Mahony, the orders I had got from Eugene Walsh, and it was decided to meet again on Sunday and hold the usual parade. We held an ordinary parade of the Company on Easter Sunday. The men who paraded were:- (16)

Con O'Mahony	Captain.
Jack Walsh (Wilsgrrove)	1st Lieutenant.
John Walsh (Keel)	2nd Lieutenant.
Charles McCarthy	Adjutant.
Michael Walsh.	
Edward Barrett.	
John Donegan.	
Joseph Carty.	
Denis Carty.	
Patrick Brien.	
William Donovan.	
James Walsh.	
Michael Donegan.	
Patrick Donegan.	
James Mahony.	
Richard Walsh.	

This was the full strength of the Company. Every man turned out; some of them quite young boys. This was the largest number we ever had in the Company. There was no change of Officers from the start of the Company down to Easter, 1916.

As soon as we knew the Rising had taken place we took what arms we had and dumped them in an empty house on the top of Kill Hill belonging to a Protestant names Berry. With the exception of a few of the young boys, the members of the Company assembled at this house every night after dark and remained there until dawn. We kept alert. The police did not know we were using this house, and they were observing our movements during the day time. From this house we had a full view of the country around and nothing could come on us unknown. We occupied it for about a fortnight.

Towards the end of the second week we got an account from a teacher coming from Clonakilty that he had seen the Ballineen Sergeant at BallinascCarthy Station. I thought it probable that he was planning a raid that night as arrests were being made in many places. We determined not to be caught. The Company Captain had stayed out with us every night until that one when he had a severe cold and went home. That night the raids took place all over the Company area and he was arrested. He was the only one from the Company arrested. The lorries came from Clonakilty.

I left the area then and went to an Aunt living at Barleyhill, West of Benduff Slate Quarries, and remained there for four or five weeks. The other men who were raided for went on the run also.

There was no I.R.B. or Fianna organisation in the area before 1916.

Signed: John Walsh
Date: 30 = 8 = 1947.

Witness: Florence O'Donoghue

