

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21
NO. W.S. 12



Éire
Telefón 61018.

ROINN COSANTA.

BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21

(Bureau of Military History 1913-21).

26 RAEDH NA NIARTHARACH,
(26 Westland Row),

BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH.
(Dublin).

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Statement by

Peadar Bracken

Officer of I.V. Tullamore,
1916

Dated - (Received 22nd August, 1947)

On "The Tullamore Incident"

A raid by R.I.C. on the I.V. Drill
Hall and the wounding of an R.I.C.
Sergeant.

20th March 1916

2 P.P. - Typescript & F'scap

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No. 2.

On Monday night March, 20th 1916, the Sinn Fein Rooms Tullamore were attacked by a mob, supported by the R.I.C. The Rooms were occupied at the time by only five or six Irish Volunteers who were engaged in checking a collection made by Cumann na mBan at a G.A.A. match on the previous day.

Volunteer Joe Wrafter and I left the Rooms after some little time and escorted home the members of Cumann na mBan who were present. While doing so, and on our way back we were subjected to the attacks of the hostile crowd. No attempt was made by the R.I.C. to afford us the least protection. The Rooms were stoned and glass was smashed in the windows.

I fired a shot through the window over the heads of the mob, and later on when an attempt was made to rush the stairway I fired a second shot which had the effect of quietening the crowd for a while, a stampede from the stairs to the street took place and we managed to close and secure the door. I instructed the Volunteers present to make a fight for it, if as I expected the R.I.C. took a hand.

I had scarcely finished when a loud knocking at the door took place, and on opening, there came in Dist. Inspt. Fitzgerald and Head Constable Stuart. When a lull in the attack came, we were ordered by the D.I. to "fall in". I informed him that the Volunteers would "fall in", only when their own officers so ordered them.

Co. Inspt. Crane and Sergt. Aherne now came on the scene and the Co. Inspector asked if a search for arms had been made, I informed him that there would be no such search. The D.I. moved across to the Co. Inspector (who was standing about one yard from me) and whispered to him. I understood the whisper to be that I was the man who had the revolver at the Geashill Cattle Drive in 1914.

Immediately the Co. Inspector made a jump for me, I drew a revolver and fired. The revolver was knocked low and the shot passed between the Co. Inspectors legs, as I fell back, I was tripped by a form and fell. Before I could get on my feet Sergt. Aherne and the Co. Inspector held me down. I fired three shots at them: - the Co. Inspector was not touched, all three going into Aherne's arm I managed to get from under in the scuffle, and as I tried to rise

the Head Constable who was standing over me aimed a blow at my head with a stick, I warded off the blow with my left arm and aimed at his body with the revolver. The weapon proved to be empty. His blow glanced off my head and partially stunned me, as he raised the stick to strike me again I struck him on the face with the empty gun.

Looking round to see if the Volunteers had got clear, I saw nobody except Sergt. Humphries and Constable Lancaster with drawn batons on guard at the door. As I had no cartridge left for the gun I seized a stick to clear myself a passage out of the Rooms, but it proved to be only a light cane. I made for the door with the revolver in my hand, and was going down the stairway when Constable Lancaster struck me on the back of the head with his baton, I fell on the landing, recovering my gun which had fallen from my grasp.

I escaped on to the street where I was again knocked down and kicked by the mob.

I managed to get clear, and in Chapel St. I met Volunteer Sean Barry and gave him my gun as I expected to be taken by the R.I.C. and did not wish to lose the gun.

Leaving Barry I went to the house of Volunteer Rody Molloy, Emmet Terrace, from whom I got a hat, and had my head attended to as I was bleeding profusely.

From Molloy's I went to John Coonan's house Arden, and after a day I went on to Owen Wyer's, Ballykeenaghan, Rahan. This man got me driven (by his workman) in a horse and trap to McCormack's Drumraney, Co. Westmeath. During the weeks following I paid a few visits to Tullamore about arms &c. On Holy Thursday night I held a meeting of the officers in the Athlone Brigade Area, arranging for the Rising which was to take place on Easter Sunday, April 23rd 1916. I remained in Drumraney till Good Friday morning. From there Seamus Brennan and I set out for Tullamore to mobilise the Volunteers for the Rising.

Signed,

Peadar Kirby

MSP 34/25453.

{ The above can be verified from the
Press Reports, or from Sinn Fein
Rebellion Handbook (Irish Times, 1917 issue) at pages 5 & 127 }

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BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21
NO. W.S. 17