

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21
No. W.S. 17



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BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21
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26 RAEDH NA NIARTHARACH,
(26 Westland Row),

BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH
(Dublin)

DOCUMENT W. S. 17.

Statement by

Eamon Lynch,
Oakville,
St. Finbarr's Park,
Glasheen Road,
Cork.

Dated 10 September, 1947.

On Tralee and Cork City I. V.
Tralee and Cork I. R. B.

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No. W.S. 17

STATEMENT OF EAMONN LYNCH, OAKVILLE,
ST. FINBARR'S PARK, GLASHEEN ROAD, CORK.

PERIOD: 1914 to 1916.

UNITS: 'D' and 'E' Coys., Tralee I.V.
'B' Coy., Cork City, I.V.
I.R.B. Tralee and Cork.

I joined 'D' Company, Tralee Battalion, Irish Volunteers, in January, 1914, at the Picturedrome in Rock Street. The Picturedrome was the Headquarters of the Tralee Volunteers until they moved to the Rink. There was a Committee in charge, of which Dr. Charlie Brennan (Father Brennan) was Chairman. The Committee was not confined to Officers; Austin Stack was on it (he was then a Volunteer in the Signal Corps). Tom Slattery of Rock Street and others were also members.

The majority of the Officers of the Tralee Volunteers came from the A.O.H., American Alliance and the G.A.A. These were the organisations of most advanced national opinion in Tralee before the start of the Volunteers. The I.R.B. membership was, I believe, small. I did not become a member until the Summer of 1914, when I was sworn in by Austin Stack. There were then about ten members in the circle of which Stack was centre and the organisation was being spread in other Companies of the Volunteers in the town.

The A.O.H. American Alliance had a membership of about forty in Tralee and had rooms in the Square. They were active in anti-recruiting and anti-British activities from 1912. Posters were put up and leaflets distributed at G.A.A. matches.

Four Companies of the Volunteers were formed in Tralee at the start. They had a total strength of between 160 and 200. When the Redmondite followers came into the organisation the strength went up to between 400 and 500. The four Companies were continued and the recruits absorbed into them - mainly into 'C' Company. The Companies were organised on a territorial basis and most of the Redmondites were in 'C' Company area. A further large influx of recruits came after the Bachelors Walk shootings. There was a big parade and Father Brennan made a speech in ~~Rock Street~~ for which he was transferred next day by the Bishop to Castletownbere. Father Breen replaced him as Chairman of the Committee and continued to function up to the time I left Tralee in 1916.

(The Rink)
The outlying districts began to organise in the Summer of 1914, and any Tralee Officers that were available went out frequently to organise and train them. The following areas were organised in that way :- Ballyroe, Ardfert, Listellig, Abbeydorney, Oakpark, Ballymacelligott, Farmers' Bridge, Townevane, and Camp. Groups were organised in all these places which later became the basis of Companies. A few ex-soldiers were engaged for training in Tralee at the start.

Some of the Redmond Officers were elected Officers and they got representation on the Committees. I think it was principally in 'C' Company that the Redmondites were elected Officers. There was no change of Officers in 'D' Company, in which I was, when they came in.

When the split came, only 34 men opted for Redmond's leadership. 'D' Company lost only 7 men out of 140. That was the position generally all over Kerry. 'D' Company did not lose any arms when these men went out.

In September, 1914, I was appointed 2nd Lieutenant of 'D' Company. The other Officers then were:- Michael Doyle, Captain, and Michael Fleming, 1st Lieutenant. Training was intensified after the Redmond Split; weekly parades and Sunday route marches and exercises were the usual forms of training.

Alfred.
At the end of March, 1915, Austin Stack detailed me to organise the Oakpark and Listellig areas. Listellig had a section at the time. 'E' Company (Oakpark) was organised by me. A Redmondite section of about 25 men existed there, and by the Summer of 1915 they came over in a body to 'E' Company. *W.* Cotton, who was an excellent training Officer, was appointed County Organiser for Kerry in 1915. He was a Protestant, an ex-Labour Exchange Clerk from Belfast. During my two weeks' holidays in the Summer of 1915 I was sent to Dingle with him training the Volunteers there. There was a Company in Dingle, a half-Company in Ballydavid, and a half-Company in Ballyferriter.

There was a big parade in Killarney for the Oireachtas in July, 1915. Units from many parts of Kerry took part in it. Arms were being procured in every way possible. We did not get any Howth rifles from Dublin, but we got some Martinis, short and long, and a few service rifles. Ammunition was scarce. A little was got by purchase out of the Military Barracks in Tralee from time to time.

I was appointed Company Captain of Oakpark and Listellig Company ('E' Company) when it was organised. This Company covered an area of about 6 square miles. It was in four Sections under the following Section Commanders:- James Talbot, Michael Taguey, Charles McMahon and Thomas McMahon. The strength was between 55 and 65. We had no hall and did our training in the open. We ran up for the Brigade Competition in open and close order drill.

After the Manchester Martyrs' parade in November, 1915, I lost my job as a result of my Volunteer activities. From that date I was engaged in full time training of the Companies around Tralee up to the following January. Austin Stack, Billy Mullins, J. McGaley and I went to Brosna and organised a Company there in January, 1916. Dan Mahony of Castleisland was with us.

In January, 1916, I came to Cork for an operation at the North Infirmary. I had met Terence MacSwiney in Tralee the previous year, and had met Tomas MacCurtain at the 1915 Convention in Dublin. They got me employment at Perry's in Patrick Street. It was the job formerly held by Daithi Barry, the Cork Brigade Adjutant at the time, who had

to leave it because of his Volunteer activities. I was attached to 'B' Company in Cork and was transferred to the I.R.B. circle in which Donal Óg O'Callaghan and Liceál O Cuill were. When I was transferred Stack made an arrangement with MacCurtain that I was to return to take charge of my Company in the event of a fight. Stack informed me of this and said that when he sent for me I was to come, no matter what the difficulties. He also said that MacCurtain would know when to tell me.

I was in the Hall in Sheares Street on Holy Thursday night and went there again on Good Friday morning. On that morning an instruction was given for a guard on a meeting which was taking place at Terence MacSwiney's house on the Victoria Road. Donal Barrett, Sean Scanlan, Paddy Trahey, and, I think, Tadg Sullivan were on duty there. Two at least were always on duty and the guard was on all day. Trahey and I were armed with revolvers; I am not sure if the others were. Tomas MacCurtain, Terence MacSwiney, Ginger O'Connell, and some Officer from Limerick with a black curly head, were at that meeting. I don't think any of the other Cork Officers attended it. I left Tomas MacCurtain at Sheares Street Hall at 11.45 p.m. that night.

Next morning (Saturday) at 05.30 hours Tomás MacCurtain and Terence MacSwiney called to my lodgings in Douglas Street and got me out of bed. They told me Stack and Casement had been arrested. They said nothing about the arms ship. MacCurtain instructed me to go to Tralee on the 07.10 hours train. He said "You will meet Ginger O'Connell and Daithi Barry at the train. Ginger will go to Tralee to take charge and you will go with him. Barry will go to Barley Hill". He also said, "Ye are lucky in having Ginger in Tralee."

I went to the train, met O'Connell and Barry and the three of us travelled to Mallow. At Mallow, O'Connell decided that he would not go to Kerry, that he would go to Dublin via Waterford instead. There was no connection off the train we were on to Dublin on the main line but there was a connection to Waterford. O'Connell said "I have no business in Tralee; I'll go to Dublin via Waterford and Wexford". Neither O'Connell nor Barry said anything to me about the arms ship and I knew nothing about it at that stage. Barry travelled with me on the train as far as Banteer Station, where he left it to go on to Barley Hill, near Newmarket. On the journey from Mallow to Banteer Barry and I discussed O'Connell's decision not to go to Kerry. Barry understood that he was to go there and the only conclusion we could come to was that he funk'd it. We heard afterwards that he did not go to Dublin.

I went on to Tralee and reported to Headquarters there. Paddy Cahill, the Brigade Adjutant, was in charge. Stack and Con Collins had been arrested. I heard that Monteith was in the A.O.H. Hall in the Square and I insisted that he be brought to the Volunteer Headquarters at the Rink, where he could be protected if an attempt was made to arrest him. I knew him as he had run Camps in Galbally and Athlone. We brought him to the Rink, dressed as a railwayman, under guard. The Dingle Company came in on Saturday night. I

did not get any information of what the plans or orders were, and I don't think any of the Officers knew.

On Easter Sunday morning Cahill sent for me, gave me a car, and instructed me to go to Ballymacelligott, Cordal, Williamstown and Barley Hill. I was to contact the Volunteers who would be assembled at these points, check communications, and tell them to stand by. I was to return via Millstreet, Rathmore and Killarney, and if I contacted any Volunteers on the return journey, I was to give them the same instructions. I did this journey and contacted Volunteer groups at the points mentioned as far as Barley Hill. Daithi Barry was in charge there. He had about two Companies but had no information or instructions. When I got back to Tralee late on Sunday night, I heard for the first time that the orders had been cancelled. I do not know who brought the message to Tralee. I returned to Cork on Monday night.

The train in which Partridge travelled from Tralee to Dublin on Good Friday left Tralee at 19.30 hours.

I heard that there were three routes by which the arms were to be distributed from Kerry :-

1. Listowel, Abbeyfeale, Limerick.
2. Castleisland, Williamstown, Newmarket.
3. Killarney, Rathmore, Millstreet.

Stack said to me afterwards, "I tried to keep it a one-man job, and it was too much".

The meeting at which the investigation into the actions of the Cork Officers took place was held in the Grianan, Queen Street, on the second Saturday night in January, 1917, under cover of a Gaelic League Dance.

SIGNED: *Samuel M. Linnig*

DATE: *10th. ^{Sept.} Aug. 1947*

WITNESS: *Florence O'Donoghue*

