

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 35



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Telefón 61018.

ROINN COSANTA.

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

(Bureau of Military History 1913-21),

26 RAEDH NA NIARTHARACH,  
(26 Westland Row),

BAILE ATHA CLIATH.  
(Dublin).

DOCUMENT W.S.35

Statement by

Michael F. Lynch,  
Prospect House,  
Rathdrum,  
Co. Wicklow.

Dated: 24th October, 1947.

On: Cork Brigade I.V., 1916.  
Tracton, Co. Cork, I.V. 1914.  
Tracton I.R.B. Circle, 1914.

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Prospect House  
Rathdown

to Wicklow  
24/10/44

Dear Florrie

Enclosing statement

signed. The address of the Hallorans is  
Ballingarry not Tracton you can correct  
same. I cannot remember any more  
which I may add, except small things  
of very little importance.

If at anytime I may be of  
help in other matters I will be only  
too glad to help you

Yours sincerely  
Michael J Lynch

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BUREAU STAIRS MILITARY 1913-21
No. W.S. 35

STATEMENT OF MICHAEL F. LYNCH,  
PROSPECT HOUSE, RATHDRUM, CO. WICKLOW.

PERIOD: 1914 to MAY, 1916.

UNITS: TRACTON COMPANY AND CORK  
BRIGADE I.V.  
TRACTON CIRCLE, I.R.B.

I had a small I.R.B. circle in Tracton and Kinsale before 1914. I was centre, and the following were members:- Tadhg Lynch, Kinsale, Miceal Breatneach, Kinsale, John O'Brien and William O'Brien, Tracton.

The O'Briens and myself organised a Company of Volunteers in Tracton early in 1914. There were about 50 men in the Company when the Split in the Volunteer organisation took place in September, 1914. Our strength was reduced by the Split to about 19 or 20, and that continued to be the position up to Easter, 1916.

We held weekly parades, Sunday route marches, and had a good deal of target practice with a .22 rifle. I attended the first Volunteer Training Camp, conducted by J.J. O'Connell, in Wicklow from 6th to 14th August, 1915. My brother, Diarmuid, was there also, and so were Seán Nolan and Daithi Barry from Cork. I again attended the Training Camp held in Sheares' Street, Cork, in January, 1916.

About 20 men from Tracton Company took part in the Manchester Martyrs' parade in Cork in November, 1915, and about the same number participated in the St. Patrick's Day parade in Cork in 1916. Some of them were armed on both occasions.

In 1915 moulds made of plaster of paris were being used to make slugs. They were very little use as they would not stand the heat. With the aid of a local blacksmith, Paddy Egan, I made an iron mould of a tongs type which would make six or eight slugs at a time. It was made in Egan's forge. We made the depressions for the slugs in it with steel ball bearings while the iron was red hot. It did not have a groove into which the molten lead could be poured, so that it was necessary to have hot tallow in which the mould was immersed before putting it into the molten lead.

At this time they were still using plaster of paris moulds in Dublin, and, at his request, I brought mine up to the O'Rahilly. He used it as a pattern from which to make others. I left it to him for a week, and they turned out a brass one in Dublin. Later brass moulds were also made in Haulbowline by some of our men working in the dockyard there. With my own mould I made thousands of slugs for Cork Brigade; several hundredweights of lead were collected by the Brigade and sent down to Tracton to me. I also filled some hundreds of cartridges with slugs myself. About four slugs were usually put in a cartridge.

I was in Cork on the Thursday before Easter Sunday, 1916, and I saw Tomás MacCurtain. He did not tell me anything definite in regard to the purpose of the parade which had been ordered for Easter Sunday, but from the preparations being made it was obvious

to me that something more than a routine mobilisation and exercise was intended. He instructed me to report to Sheares' Street Hall on Easter Saturday night with my own motor cycle and side car.

I returned to Tracton and gave instructions that the Company was to join Ballinhassig Company and parade with them on Easter Sunday. As far as I know, the following seven men paraded on Easter Sunday:-

Michael F. Lynch,	Tracton.
John O'Brien,	do
William O'Brien,	do
John Noonan,	Ballyfeard.
William Noonan,	do
Timothy Halloran,	Tracton. Ballingarry
John Halloran,	do do

(see attached  
letter. fm.)

The arms in the Company at Easter, 1916, were:-

Two service rifles, which I had bought in Dublin.  
Four doubled-barrelled shot guns ) owned by members of  
One single-barrelled shot gun ) the Company.  
One .45 revolver with about 25 rounds.  
One .32 revolver with about 25 rounds.

I reported to the Hall in Sheares' Street on Easter Saturday evening in uniform, with my motor cycle and side car. I was armed with a service rifle and two revolvers.

On Easter Sunday morning the side car of my motor cycle was loaded up with ammunition, gelignite, powder, a few hand grenades, coils of fuse and detonators. I had a full load. Tomás MacCurtain instructed me to take these war materials to Crookstown where he would meet me later and give me further instructions. I understood from him that McNeilus was to be with me later on whatever mission we were going, and that the explosives were intended for blowing bridges. I left for Crookstown about the time the Cork City Companies were moving off from Sheares' Street, but I was there before them and had to wait their arrival.

When Tomás MacCurtain arrived in Crookstown he instructed me to go on to Bweeing where Commandant P. Twomey's Battalion would be assembled, and to take charge of them until he arrived there. On the way to Bweeing two R.I.C. men signalled me to stop at a point on the road which I don't now remember. The road was unfamiliar to me. I took the most direct route. I pretended to comply with the signal to stop, but on coming abreast of the police I accelerated and shot past them. If they had attempted to stop me by force I would have resisted, to ensure the safety of the military stores I was carrying. I had a .45 and a .32 pistol on me and a rifle in the side car.

While awaiting Commandant MacCurtain's arrival at Bweeing I deemed it advisable to keep the men assembled there active, and exercises were carried out. I put my motor cycle in a back yard under a guard of five Volunteers armed with rifles and fixed bayonets. These men later reported that four R.I.C. and two others, stated to be detectives, rushed into the yard, and that one of the Volunteers on guard ripped the tunic of the R.I.C. Sergeant with his bayonet. The police then withdrew.

Tomás MacCurtain and Terence MacSwiney arrived at Bweeing in a motor car between seven and eight o'clock on Easter Sunday evening. I have no recollection of Tom Kent being with them. Tomás MacCurtain spoke to all the assembled Volunteers, standing on the roadside fence. As far as I remember, he said something to the effect that they had expected the enemy would attack on that day but it had not come off, the men were to return to their homes, keep their organisation intact, safeguard their arms and be ready when called upon again. It was a short speech. Terry MacSwiney did not speak. I do not know where they went from Bweeing.

Tomás MacCurtain, before leaving, instructed me to go to Carriganimma and inform any men of the Cork Brigade still assembled there that they were to return to their homes. It was nearly dark when I left Bweeing, and raining. I went to Carriganimma, still carrying the load of explosives. I contacted four or five men who were there, and, as we were all rain-soaked, we spent the night at Paud O'Donoghue's house in the vicinity of the village.

Next morning, Monday, I drove back to the city and unloaded the explosives at the Hall in Sheares' Street. I got into Cork about 2 p.m. Having, after some difficulty, got a replacement for a burst tyre, I reported back to Sheares' Street sometime in the evening. Tomás MacCurtain was there and he ordered seven or eight men present, including myself, to arm themselves with rifles and take up positions of defence within the building.

About 9 p.m. on Monday night I was given a despatch for Commandant Tom Hales. My instructions were to deliver it to Hyde's, Knockalucy, Ballinhassig, to be sent on from there by the usual despatch route to Tom Hales. I was then to return to my own area, keep men alert and await orders. Bob Hales left Sheares' Street with me in the side car of the motor cycle. I do not know what the contents of the despatch for Tom Hales were. My engine broke down near the Viaduct, due to the effects of rain during the preceding 28 hours. Bob Hales and I went on foot across country to Knockalucy, where we arrived about midnight. Tadhg Hyde set off at once with the despatch to Ballinadee.

I stayed at Hyde's that night. Next day, Tuesday, I walked to my own house, Granig, Tracton, 10 miles distant, and brought my rifle and pistols with me.

On Wednesday, April 26th, Canon O'Leary, P.P. Tracton, sent for me and requested that my own arms and ammunition and those of the men of the Tracton Company be delivered to him with the understanding that he would keep them safely. I refused.

No orders came to me from the Brigade during Easter week. I was arrested on May 5th. The following were also arrested:-

Timothy Lynch,	Granig, Tracton.
John Noonan,	Ballygrissane, Ballyfeard.
William F. Noonan,	do do.
John O'Brien,	Tracton.
William O'Brien,	do
Timothy Halloran,	do Ballingarry (see attached letter)
John Halloran,	do do. (FN.)

No arms were surrendered in the Company area and none were captured in raids.

There were no Fianna or Cuman-na-mBan organisations in the area before 1916.

Soon after the start of Tracton Company I.V. the following Officers were elected, and there was no change of Officers down to Easter, 1916 :-

Captain: Michael F. Lynch.

SIGNED:

Michael F. Lynch

DATE:

24<sup>th</sup> October 1947

WITNESS:

Thomas Donohue

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