

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRÉ MÍLEATA 1913-21

NO. W.S.

37



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BURO STAIRÉ MÍLEATA 1913-21

(Bureau of Military History 1913-21),

26 RAEDH NA NIARTHARACH,
(26 Westland Row),

BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH.
(Dublin).

DOCUMENT W.S. 37.

Statement by

Cornelius O'Mahony,
13, Casement Street,
Clonakilty,
Co. Cork.

Dated: 15th October, 1947.

On: Aichill, Co. Cork, Coy. I.V.
1915-1916.

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STATEMENT OF CORNELIUS O'MAHONY,
13, CASEMENT STREET, CLONAKILTY,
CO. CORK.

PERIOD: MARCH, 1915 TO MAY, 1916.

UNIT: AIOHILL COMPANY, I.V.

There was no Volunteer organisation in Aiohill before March, 1915. On a Sunday in that month the Clogough and Ballinadee Companies came on a march to Aiohill; Terence MacSwiney and Fred Murray from Cork met them here, and MacSwiney spoke at a public meeting after Mass. The Company was formed that day.

There was a parade of the Cork City Volunteers to Bealnablath on the following Sunday. Four of us - Jack Walsh, Wilsgrrove, John Walsh, Keel, Charles McCarthy and myself attended. Tomás MacCurtain and Terence MacSwiney were there. After that we held regular parades two nights a week and marches almost every Sunday. The strength of the Company was sixteen men.

On some of the week night parades we marched to Ballineen and Enniskeane. In some of the Sunday parades we combined with other Companies, sometimes marching to Lyre for exercises with the Company there. In December, 1915, we went to Timoleague, Lislevane and Grange. On another Sunday in February, 1916, there was a big parade at Clonakilty and exercises afterwards at Ardfield, in which the Ballinadee, Lyre and Clogough Companies also took part. There were no Volunteers in Clonakilty at that time, the people were mostly hostile, and we were attacked with stones and bottles coming back from Ardfield. We were also on a Sunday route march to Kilbrittain in which the Ballinadee and Clogough Companies took part.

As well as training, these Sunday marches had the object of recruiting for the Volunteers in the districts we visited, and of getting Companies going in the areas where none existed. Police were always present at these parades, usually following each Company for the day, and returning with them in the evening.

Soon after the formation of the Company the following Officers were elected, and there was no change down to Easter, 1916:-

Captain: Con O'Mahony.
1st Lieutenant: Jack Walsh (Wilsgrrove).
2nd Lieutenant: John Walsh (Keel).
Adjutant: Charles McCarthy.

The men paid 2d or 3d a week into a Company fund for the purchase of equipment. With this we purchased, belts, bandoliers, haversacks and puttees. All the men were equipped by Easter, 1916. We had no rifles in the Company. We had three air guns and ten or twelve shot guns, either belonging to the men themselves or on loan from local farmers. We had a fair supply of shot gun ammunition and about 100 rounds of it had been filled with buckshot at Jack Walsh's, Wilsgrrove.

About a fortnight before Easter, 1916, the order for the Easter exercises came to us verbally from Tom Hales at Ballinadee through Mike Walsh of Gaggin. It was usual for all messages to come to us from Ballinadee through Clogough Company of which Eugene Walsh was Captain, and through us to Lyre Company. The orders for Easter Sunday were that we were to parade with all arms and ammunition and three days' rations, and march to Maerroom. We thought it was an ordinary route march, and had no information that anything was on. We did not at any time before Easter Sunday get any intimation that anything more than an ordinary parade was intended.

There was a meeting of all the members of the Company arranged for Easter Saturday night. At that meeting the 1st Lieutenant, Jack Walsh, told me that word had been sent by Eugene Walsh, Gaggin, Captain of Clogough Company, that the parade fixed for next day had been cancelled. I accepted that without question, as it was usual for orders to come to us verbally in this way from Eugene Walsh. *Sam met him* Eugene Walsh was ~~not~~, however, at Confession at Aichill on that Saturday, as stated by Jack Walsh. I could never afterwards understand why Eugene Walsh would send such an order and parade with his own Company next day. I never got any explanation of the matter subsequently.

Having accepted on Easter Saturday night the cancellation of the orders to march to Macroom next day as genuine, I decided we would have an ordinary parade in our own area on Sunday. We held that parade. The whole Company mobilised, and the following are the names:- (16)

Con O'Mahony, Captain.
Jack Walsh (Wilsgrrove) 1st Lieut.
John Walsh (Keel) 2nd Lieut.
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.

The arms we had were:-

Three air guns.
Ten or twelve shot guns, with about 300 rounds, 100 of which was loaded with slug.

We had no rifles, revolvers, pikes or explosives.

No order came to us during Easter week, but when we heard the Rising had taken place in Dublin we took our arms to an empty house on Kill Hill owned by a man named Berry. We assembled there after dark each night for over a week, and remained until dawn. The police did not know we were using this house, although they were observing our movements during the daytime.

I was arrested on 7th May, taken first to Clonakilty and afterwards to Cork Detention Barracks that night. With other prisoners I was taken to Richmond Barracks, Dublin, and then to Wakefield. I was interned in Frogoch until the end of December, 1916.

There were no I.R.B. or Fianna organisations in the area before 1916.

SIGNED: Lionel O'Mahony
DATE: 15th October 1947

WITNESS: Plouence O'Donoghue

