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BURO STAIRÉ MÍLEATA 1913-21

NO. W.S. 46



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Statement by

Patrick P. Twomey,  
Kilmona, Blarney,  
Co. Cork.

Dated: 10th October, 1947.

On: Kilmona Coy. I.V.  
3rd Bn. Cork Brigade, 1915-16.  
3rd Battn. I.R.B. Circle.

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STATEMENT OF PATRICK P. TWOMEY, KILMONA,  
BLARNEY, CO. CORK.

PERIOD: APRIL, 1915 TO EASTER, 1916.

UNITS: KILMONA COMPANY AND 3RD BATTALION,  
CORK BRIGADE I.V.

I was never a member of the Irish National Volunteer Organisation. Like my father, I could not follow Redmond. There was a Company of the Redmond Volunteers in Blarney, but none in this district. I was most anxious to join some organisation with Irish-Ireland ideas, but the position of the Volunteer organisation did not appear to be very clear until after the split. I remember attending an entertainment at the Opera House, Cork, held under the auspices of the Irish Volunteers. A lady gave a recitation, standing in front of the curtain. I remember the part of it, "the men who died for Ireland, who will stand and take their place?". The curtain went up showing a party of twenty or thirty Irish Volunteers on the stage with their rifles at the slope. I decided that this was my party.

That was about April, 1915. I went in to Tomás McCurtain and told him I wanted to join the Volunteers. He and his brother, Seán, had a shop in Shandon Street at the time, and Tomás used to travel about this part of the country in connection with his business. We arranged that I would collect some of the local boys and we would meet him one evening at Kilmona. The meeting took place as arranged and the Kilmona Company was formed. We had about ten at the start. Tomás gave us some instruction while his horse fed at the side of the road. He said he would look after getting us an instructor, and from that on we were never short of one. Pat Higgins or Daithi Barry or Seán Nolan used to come out to us. By Easter, 1916, we had twenty-five men in the Company.

We held three parades a week from the start up to Easter, 1916, and also Sunday marches and exercises. Some of the Sunday marches were for the purpose of recruiting for the Volunteers. On one of these we went to Mourneabbey - 7 miles. The first Sunday we went there everyone was gone from the Church when we arrived; we went again the next Sunday on the same mission. Another recruiting march was to Whitechurch - 4 miles. In some of these we were joined by Courtbrack Company or the Cork City Companies. There was a field day at Blarney one Sunday at which Terence MacSwiney was present. I was in Limerick at the Whit Sunday parade in 1915, and also at the O'Donovan Rossa funeral in Dublin. I was the only one from the Company at both these events. Some men from the Company attended the Manchester Martyrs' parade in Cork in 1915, and the St. Patrick's Day parade in 1916. Six men from the Company, including myself, took part in the Shooting Competition at Carrigtwohill in 1915.

We held Church door collections for the Arms Fund, making collections in Carriganavar and Whitechurch, as well as in our own area. The men paid 3d a week into a fund for the purchase of equipment. Out of this fund we purchased haversacks, bandoliers, belts and puttees. There was only one Volunteer cap in the Company - mine. We had only one uniform - mine. By Easter, 1916,

all the men in the Company were equipped with haversacks, bandoliers, belts and puttees. In September, 1915, a Council meeting of Officers of the Company in the area was held in the Hall in Sheares Street, Cork. At that meeting the 3rd Battalion was formed, comprising the following Companies:-

Courtbrack.  
Kilmona.  
Mourneabbey.  
Donoughmore.  
Waterloo.  
Whitechurch.

I was appointed Battalion O/C., but no other Battalion Officers were appointed either then or at any time up to Easter Week, 1916. I continued to act as Captain of Kilmona Company in the same period. There was no change in either position from the start up to Easter, 1916, and no other Officer either from Kilmona Company or for the Battalion.

After the Battalion was formed the Brigade O/C. instructed me to go round the Companies regularly and see that they were working. I spent one night every week in Mourneabbey and another in Waterloo from then up to January, 1916, when the Course was run in Sheares Street. I went occasionally to the other Companies, with the exception of Courtbrack which had a competent man in charge and could manage for itself, except on inspection.

In January, 1916, I attended a two weeks' Course conducted by J.J. O'Connell of Dublin at the Hall in Sheares' Street. I was the only one from Kilmona Company who attended the Course, but there was a man from Donoughmore Company (Jack Manning) and a man from Mourneabbey Company (Jeremiah Mullane) on it also. We all got certificates at the conclusion of the Course. Donoughmore and Mourneabbey then had competent men to take charge of instruction and from then until Easter I concentrated on Waterloo, Whitechurch and Kilmona Companies, and regular Council meetings were held.

Early in 1916 I was sworn in to the I.R.B. by Tomás MacCurtain at his own house in Blackpool. He said to me then that he did not know the moment we might be wanted. We would be mobilised, but in case the time was too short he would send me the following telegram, which would mean instant mobilisation:- "Meal is expected to advance, buy immediately".

On the second Sunday before Easter, 1916, a meeting of Officers was held at the Hall in Sheares' Street in connection with arrangements for the Easter Exercises. The Brigade O/C., Tomás MacCurtain, issued instructions there to the effect that every Company was to parade on Easter Sunday with all arms and equipment and two days' rations. They were also to bring blankets or heavy coats as they would be out overnight. The time and place of mobilisation for all Companies of 3rd Battalion was fixed at 4 o'clock on Sunday afternoon at Bweeing Cross, 8 miles from Kilmona. He did not specify the purpose of the exercises, but it was clear to all of us from the particular care taken to ensure the most exact compliance with the orders

issued that something out of the ordinary was afoot. Moreover, Tomás made the significant remark that we "would have the pleasure of firing ball ammunition".

On the Monday of Holy Week Fred Murray called to me with verbal confirmation of the orders for the mobilisation on Easter Sunday. On the following morning he called again with an instruction changing the time of mobilisation of Battalion at Bweeing Cross to 2 o'clock instead of 4 o'clock - 2 hours earlier, otherwise the orders for Sunday were unchanged. He brought an instruction also that I was to report to the Brigade O/C. at the Hall in Sheares' Street on Wednesday night. I notified all the Companies of the change of time for Sunday's parade. Kilmona Company mobilised at 11 a.m. at Kilmona and there met a contingent from Whitechurch. I led both Companies to Bweeing.

I went on to Cork on Wednesday night and saw Tomás MacCurtain at the Hall in Sheares' Street. He went over the instructions for Sunday again in detail, and he was most particular that everything should work out exactly as planned. The instructions should be carried out to the letter. He said big things were happening, but he did not specifically say there was to be a Rising or that a landing of arms was expected. He did, however, repeat again that we would have the pleasure of firing ball ammunition.

While I was with him Terence MacSwiney came in. Tomás asked him how did he get on. Terry said (as far as I remember), "Not very well. The whole thing was discussed and when it was finished I asked was there any alternative in case of failure. The whole party jumped and said 'Cork again ! Cork again !'". Tomás said, "That's too bad". That was all the discussion on the matter that took place in my presence. I got the impression that Terry had just come back from Dublin, but, of course, I do not know definitely that it was from Dublin he had come.

The arms of Kilmona Company on Easter Sunday, 1916, were:-

Eleven shot guns, with a plentiful supply of ordinary ammunition for them. No ammunition had been slug loaded.

One .32 revolver with about 30 rounds which I had purchased myself from Daithi Barry.

One .22 Rifle.

One pike with a four-foot handle.

I had the revolver and the pike. There was an instruction that Officers should carry side arms and a pike with a four-foot handle. Four of the shot guns and a quantity of the shot gun ammunition I and another man of Kilmona Company had purchased in Cork out of Company funds a short time before Easter Week, 1916. The remainder belonged to neighbouring farmers. We had no rifles in the Company and some of the men were unarmed.

The following is a list of the men who paraded on Easter Sunday, 1916, from Kilmona Company:-

Patrick P. Twomey (Capt. and Battn. O/C),	Kilmona.
John McNamara,	Sluggera.
Michael McNamara,	do
James Walsh,	Kilmona.
Tom Walsh,	do
John W. Walsh,	do
Jim Walsh,	do
Pat Mulcahy,	do
John O'Neill,	Ballymartin.
John J. Walsh,	Kilmona.
William Cronin,	do
Tim Cronin,	do
John Joe Cronin,	do
Michael Crean,	do
Eugene O'Neill,	Rathduff.
Michael Harrington,	Glencalum.
Dan O'Connell,	Lisavoura.

We mobilised about 11 o'clock on Easter Sunday at Kilmona. Whitechurch Company joined us there and we marched to Ahadillane where we met Courtbrack, Mourneabbey and Waterloo Companies. The whole party marched to Bweeing Cross where we were joined by the Donoughmore Company who had come there direct from their own area. At Bweeing Cross also we met the Mallow Company with Dan Hegarty in charge, and a section from Nadd under Liam O'Brien. The 3rd Battalion and these two units comprised the total mobilisation at Bweeing.

We expected the Brigade O/C. to arrive at Bweeing soon after we reached there, but as he did not come a guard of Courtbrack Company was put on the arms and the remainder of the men were given a fall-out for refreshments. The day was cold and we decided to carry out some exercises to keep the men occupied. These had been carried out on a hill about half a mile away and the men were back at the cross and formed up again before Tomás MacCurrtain arrived. Miceal Lynch had arrived at Bweeing soon after us, but he had no message or instruction. He remained until the Brigade O/C. arrived. There were two detectives from Mallow there also and R.I.C. men from Dromohane.

It was late when Tomás MacCurrtain arrived - perhaps between five and six o'clock. David O'Callaghan, the driver of the car, and one of the Hales of Ballinadee, who was acting as spare driver, were the only ones with him. He appeared to be in a great hurry and addressed the whole parade at once. He said the exercises were cancelled. The men were to return quietly to their homes and keep their arms safely. They may soon be wanted again and may be called upon in the near future. They should remain alert and stand to arms until further orders. He left before we did, going in the direction of Cork. I do not know what his subsequent movements were that day.

The evening got very wet and in the march back to our own areas everybody got soaked. We remained on the alert, expecting fresh orders, and the next order that came from the Brigade was to dump arms. I think David O'Callaghan brought it but I am not

sure of what day. We heard nothing of any intention on the part of the City men to move out during Easter Week, nor did we get any request for assistance in bringing out their arms. We did not hear of the loss of the arms ship for three or four days after the occurrence.

Police under a D.I. raided for me in the first week of May. I saw them coming and escaped. They turned the house inside out, searching for arms. When the police order for the surrender of arms was issued, I am sorry to say that four guns, the property of the Kilmona Company, or subs., were surrendered to Rathduff R.I.C. The Sergeant there said to some of them "Why the devil didn't ye keep them. I never reported ye were there". One man, who was about to surrender his gun, gave me a new shot gun for my old one to hand in. I could not prevent the surrender. The .22 rifle was given to Waterloo Company prior to 1916 and the local Sergeant asked me for it several times. I never told him where it went.

Early in 1917 there was some kind of enquiry into the action of the Brigade Officers at Easter, 1916. It was held in the Grinán in Queen Street, Cork, and there was a Gaelic League Dance going on while it was being held. I do not remember who conducted the enquiry, but Tom Hales made charges against the Brigade Officers, amounting to an imputation that they refused to fight. There were Officers from various parts of the County present, but, as far as I remember, Tom got no support. I do not know what the result of the enquiry was.

An I.R.B. circle of at least six men existed in the Battalion area at Easter, 1916. I was centre. T.J. Golden, Courtbrack, Jim Harte, Whitechurch, and Jack Manning, Donoughmore, were certainly in the circle. I cannot now remember who the others were.

There was no Fianna organisation in the Battalion area before 1916.

SIGNED:

Patrick P. Twomey

DATE:

October 10th 1944.

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witness  
BASE:

Shannon Donoghue