

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 58



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ROINN COSANTA.

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26 RAEDH NA NIARTHARACH,
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Statement by

Patrick O'Brien,
Girlington, Ballineen,
Co. Cork.

Dated: 1st November, 1947.

On: Dunmanway 1905-1916.
I.R.B. and I.V. Coy.

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**STATEMENT OF PATRICK O'BRIEN, GIRLOUGH, BALLINEEN,
CO. CORK.**

PERIOD: 1905 to EASTER, 1916.

UNIT: DUNMANWAY COMPANY, I.V.

The Republican Brotherhood was firmly established in this area about 60 years ago. A group of men survived out of it down to the establishment of the Volunteers and gave help and guidance to a younger generation. They were - Daniel McCarthy, East Green, Dunmanway, Patrick Ahern, Church Street, Dunmanway, Patrick and James McCarthy (Crúig), O'Donovan, Droumdrastel, Denis D. O'Donovan, Behagh and John O'Brien, Girlough.

When Sinn Fein was launched by Arthur Griffith in 1905, all his literature was carefully read and distributed amongst this group. The minds of the majority of the people were occupied with the catch-cries of the opposing political parties. In County Cork William O'Brien had strong support, outside it John Redmond held sway. The small group here did not support either party. The National Volunteers had a splendid Company in Dunmanway in 1914, but the Republican element never took part with them.

In June, 1915, the following met in Dunmanway to form a Company of the Irish Volunteers:- Con Ahern, Michael McCarthy (killed at Kilmichael Ambush), Ned Young, Dick O'Neill, Tadhg O'Shea, William Duggan, Timothy O'Brien, Michael Mackey, Con Hurley (The Green).

The old I.R.B. group had a fund lodged in the Bank in Dunmanway and they agreed to withdraw it and make it available for the purchase of arms. The money was sent to Dublin, but we never got any arms. That is what became of funds that were held for upwards of 40 years. Mackey was drill master. He was a baker by trade, and had had some training.

Tom Donovan of Behagh was then a well-versed Republican, and I think it was about July, 1915, that he organised a Section of the Dunmanway Company in Behagh. The men in it at the start were:- Tom and Denis Donovan, Jeremiah Beasy, Michael Murphy, Pat and Tim Corcoran, John J. and P. Coakley; Tim Dohovan, James and Timothy Coakley, Dan and Jeremiah Kelleher.

The Dunmanway and Behagh Sections paraded Ballinacarriga area and set an example. A meeting was arranged and a Section formed in Ballinacarriga in August, 1915. The men were:- James McCarthy, Patrick McCarthy, John Hurley, Michael Crowley, Michael Sullivan, Daniel O'Connor, Denis Collins, Patrick O'Connell, Dan O'Mahony, Timothy O'Mahony, Thomas O'Keefe, Jeremiah Ahern, Patrick O'Brien, John Hurley, Con Lane, Tim Lane, Myles Sweeney. The three Sections, Dunmanway, Behagh and Ballinacarriga, comprised Dunmanway Company.

The Officers were:-

Captain:	Con Ahern.
2nd i/c:	Michael McCarthy.

I was in charge of the Ballinacarriga Section, and Tom Donovan of the Behagh Section. We met and drilled together and became thoroughly trained, being fortunate in having such an experienced drill instructor as Mackey. Con Ahern, Michael McCarthy, Tom Donovan and myself held weekly meetings in Dunmanway and discussed all matters relative to the area. As far as I can remember, the meetings were held on Wednesday night at 8 o'clock.

Our first public parade outside the Company area was in November, 1915, for the Manchester Martyrs in Cork. Each Section made a collection to buy equipment for this turn-out, and we collected enough to buy caps, belts and haversacks. Con Ahern bought the equipment for all three Sections. Ballinacarriga and Behagh Sections marched into Dunmanway, joined the Dunmanway men there and all went to Cork by train. About 60 men from the Company paraded. The parade was a real success.

In January, 1916, a despatch route was established between Cork and Dunmanway, via Ballinhassig, Ballinadee, Clogough, Lyre, Ballinacarriga to Dunmanway.

In the same month Michael McCarthy and Con Ahern attended the training course carried out by J.J. O'Connell at the Hall in Sheares Street. Tom Donovan and myself were to arrange for their expenses, but, as far as I remember, they were never paid. On the Sunday after their return a sham battle was held in Ballinacarriga, all three Sections taking part. From that on we were training very hard, and reading the "Volunteer" and the "Spark" for our Sections. Michael McCarthy and Con Ahern were representing the Company at County Committee meetings in Cork.

On Christmas Day, 1915, Seán Hales and Jim Walsh, Lyre, arranged a parade at Corran Hill, three miles South of Ballineen. Ballinacarriga Section took part in it with them. These parades were of great value in organising the districts. What we wanted most at that time was money to buy arms.

About 60 men from the Company attended the St. Patrick's Day parade in Cork in 1916. This time we were all armed. Dunmanway Section had 4 or 5 rifles and some shot guns. I had borrowed shot guns from local farmers. Behagh also had shot guns. There were about 20 pikes in the Company. We had shot gun bayonets also.

On the Tuesday before Easter Sunday Terence MacSwiney came to Dunmanway and made our arrangements. The orders for Easter Sunday were that we were to parade at Dunmanway with all arms, ammunition and equipment, and march to Inchigeela, 13 miles to the North. There we would receive further instructions. Jim Walsh, Captain of Lyre Company, told me that Terence MacSwiney left it optional to him to go with Bandon or Dunmanway Company, and he decided to march with Dunmanway Company. Terence MacSwiney said nothing directly as regards the purpose of the parade; he did not say there was to be a Rising, or that we were getting arms, though there was a vague expectation of arms.

We mobilised every man in the Ballinacarriga Section. There were a number of rumours in circulation, and these had the effect of keeping a number of men from turning up. The following ~~eleven~~ ^{nine} men from the Section paraded on Easter Sunday:-

Patrick O'Brien.
James McCarthy.
Michael Sullivan.
James Driscoll.
Thomas Keefe.

*Patrick McCarthy
Michael Crowley
Patrick Coakley
John Hurley*

We were armed with ^{nine} ~~eleven~~ shot guns and 225 rounds of ammunition. We had three saddle horses.

Lyre and Dunmanway Companies assembled in Dunmanway after 8 o'clock Mass and marched to Inchigeela. Tomás MacCurtain and Terence MacSwiney met us there and informed us that the parade had been called off. We were dismissed for an hour, and in a downpour of rain we marched back to Dunmanway.

At about 2 a.m. on either Wednesday or Thursday morning of Easter Week Jim Walsh, Captain of Lyre Company, came to me at Gurlough and said that he had got a message from Tom Hales to find out from Dunmanway what they would do, and to send Michael McCarthy on the 9.15 a.m. train to Bandon, from which he was to proceed to Ballinadee. Precise directions were given as to how he was to reach Ballinadee. I went into Dunmanway at once and saw Michael McCarthy at about 4 a.m. He sent for Con Ahern. We discussed what we would do, but came to no decision other than to send Michael McCarthy to Ballinadee and wait to see what they would do. He went to Ballinadee and came back on the 4.30 train. I did not see him on his return, but I heard he had got instructions from Tom Hales to go to Ballingeary.

We remained on the alert until Saturday when we heard the fight was over in Dublin. We had got no orders in the meantime. On May 3rd the following were raided for:- Michael McCarthy, Edward Young, Liam Duggan, Tadhg O'Shea, Con Ahern, Con O'Sullivan, Dunmanway, J.J. and Paddy Coakley, Manch, James Donovan, Manch, and myself. The following were arrested:- Liam Duggan, Daniel McCarthy (father of Michael McCarthy), Con Ahern, Tadhg O'Shea and Con O'Sullivan. There were three of us on the run for nearly two months. No arms were captured in the raids and none were surrendered.

Apart from the group of old I.R.B. men referred to earlier, there was no I.R.B. organisation in the district before 1916. There was no Fianna organisation. *to my knowledge.*

Early in 1917 a query was sent to us from Cork inquiring if we would be satisfied to carry on under the same Brigade Officers, and we replied that we would be satisfied.

SIGNED: Patrick O'Brien

DATE: 1. 11. 1917.

WITNESS: Rosemary Donohue

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