

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRÉ MÍLEATA 1913-21

NO. W.S. 76



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BURO STAIRÉ MÍLEATA 1913-21

(Bureau of Military History 1913-21).

26 RAEDH NA NÍARTHARACH,
(26 Westland Row),

BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH
(Dublin)

DOCUMENT W.S. 76

Statement by:

Seamus Hickey,
Main Street,
Millstreet,
CO. CORK.

Dated: 10th December, 1947.

On: Millstreet Coy. I.V.

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ORIGINAL

STATEMENT OF SEAMUS HICKEY, MAIN STREET, MILLSTREET,
CO. CORK.

PERIOD: 1913 to MAY, 1916.

UNIT: MILLSTREET COMPANY, I.V.

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In 1913 the campaign against recruiting for the British Forces was carried on in Millstreet by Jerry Twomey and myself, assisted later by Con Meany. The O'Briens of Inchamay House, Lyre, Banteer, brought us the first supplies of anti-recruiting literature. I think "Irish Freedom" kept up the supplies after that. We got small gummed slips printed "Boycott England's Immoral Army" which could easily be pasted up in many places. On one occasion we painted the same slogan conspicuously with tar on the gable end of a house near the Railway Hotel. I was one of the crowd looking at it next morning when the R.I.C. Sergeant came along and demanded to know who had done it. I said, "Probably Mick the Painter" - a local man who was then dead. The Sergeant said sourly that "there was no need to go to the grave for the culprit". The police tried obliterating the slogan with lime, but this only gave it a fine background.

In 1914 I was working in Cork. I was sworn in to the I.R.B. there by Diarmuid Lynch. Jerry Twomey was sworn in about the same time. I gave Diarmuid Lynch a few names in Millstreet, but I do not think much progress was made with the organisation there. I attended a meeting of a Circle in Red Abbey Street while in Cork.

The first Volunteer Corps was formed in Millstreet in May, 1914. They were all Redmondites and were formed for a political purpose. None of our people were in it. About this time I was working in Charleville and joined the Volunteer Corps there. Captain Talbot Crosbie addressed the Volunteers there and spoke strongly in favour of control by Redmond. He asked, at the conclusion of his address, to have all those who agreed with him step forward. I was the only man who did not do so.

I was back in Millstreet when the Company was formed immediately after the public meeting addressed by Terence MacSwiney on 1st November, 1915. The town of Millstreet was largely hostile or indifferent. Before 1916 the Company never had a strength of more than seven or eight men who could be depended upon.

The following Officers were elected at the start and continued to hold office:-

Captain:	Cornelius J. Meany.
Lieut.:	Seamus Hickey.
Secretary:	Jeremiah Twomey.

Jim Buckley, who was too old for active service, acted as Treasurer.

The orders received for Easter Sunday, 1916, were for a parade with all arms and equipment. We had no information of a definite nature that it was to be anything more than an ordinary parade, although there were some vague rumours in circulation. The following paraded in Millstreet on Easter Sunday morning:-

Cornelius J. Meany.
Seamus Hickey.
Jeremiah Twomey.
Daniel A. Hickey.
Michael Riordan.
Patrick O'Sullivan.
Cornelius Healy.

The arms which we had were:-

Four single shot .303 rifles, with about 200 rounds.
Three shot guns, with about 200 rounds.
Five revolvers .32, with about 25 rounds.

We had also about 100 three-pronged spikes made by me for use against Cavalry. These were so made that however they were laid on the ground one spike was vertical. We had made a number of pikes also. I do not think we had any handles for them, and no pikes were taken out by any of the four Companies on Easter Sunday. We had purchased the single shot .303 rifles in 1914 for 50/- each from Dan Dennehy, Rathmore. He had got 14 of them for sale. I had made a mould for manufacturing slugs in 1915. This had gone round to the four Companies; a number of slugs were made and some cartridges loaded with them.

I do not recollect clearly why it was decided on Sunday night that I should go to Cork on Monday. There must have been anticipation on our part that orders would come to us, and, when they did not come, I was instructed to go to Brigade Headquarters in Cork to seek them. I went by train on Monday. The local R.I.C. Sergeant travelled to Cork on the same train, whether for the purpose of keeping me under observation or not I do not know, but I think he followed me to the Volunteer Hall in Sheares' Street.

I did not see Tomás MacCurtain or Terence MacSwiney at the Volunteer Hall, although I waited until the last possible minute which would enable me to catch the train back. They had not arrived at the Hall up to the time I left. Seán O'Sullivan and Tadg Barry were in and out, but neither they nor Pat Higgins, whom I saw also, had any information other than that fighting was taking place in Dublin. From those present in the Hall I could get no definite orders, other than the general advice that we should evade arrest and be ready in case word was sent to us again. I returned to Millstreet on Monday night.

In the hope that some orders would come to us we mobilised on Tuesday and kept together all day. No word of any kind came. I heard that a despatch came from Kerry to Millstreet on Monday night, to be forwarded to Cork. I do not know what became of it, but I do not think it went to Cork. When no orders had come to us on Tuesday night we dismissed.

As far as I know, the only members of the I.R.B. in the area were Jerry Twomey, Con Meany and myself. There was no Fianna or Cumann-na-mBhan organisation in the area before Easter, 1916.

SIGNED: Seamus O'H. Meany

DATE: 10 - 12 - 47

WITNESS: Florence O'Donoghue

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