

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21

BURÓ STAIRÉ MÍLEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 93



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BURÓ STAIRÉ MÍLEATA 1913-21

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26 RAEDH NA NÍARTHARACH,  
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BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH.  
(Dublin).

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Statement by: Dan Corkery, (Senator)  
Macroom,  
Co. Cork.

Dated: 18th October, 1947

On: I.R.B. and Cork I.V.  
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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

NO. W.S. 99.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR DAN CORKERY,  
MACROOM.

PERIOD: 1900 to MAY, 1916.

UNITS: MACROOM COMPANY AND 5TH BATTALION I.V.

I was sworn into the Macroom I.R.B. Circles in 1900 by Cornelius O'Shea, Macroom. We were starting football in Macroom about the same time. There were there two I.R.B. Circles in the town and districts adjoining it. The Circle I was in covered Pound Lane and Masseytown areas; Con O'Shea was centre and there were about ten members. The other Circle covered the Eastern side of the town. Jack Murphy, Sleeveen, was the centre.

Meetings were held usually once a month in different places round the town. The only visitor I remember coming to these meetings was a man who attended a meeting about 1902 or 1903. We were told he was from America, but I have no recollection of what he said, or whether his visit had any particular significance. Jack Murphy had contact with P.N. Fitzgerald in Cork. Dave Murphy, Coachford, was an active member at that time. The subscription was 5d a month. We had no arms.

In 1905 or 1906 the I.R.B. men in Macroom started the Young Ireland Society. Denis Murphy of the Garcoagh, who had returned from the U.S.A., was President. From then down to the time the Volunteers started the Young Ireland Society organised the Manchester Martyrs' celebrations in Macroom each year. All the I.R.B. men were members of the Young Ireland Society, but it had many other members who were not organisation men. Prominent amongst them was Donal Ó Murchadha, a native of Macroom, who had been in the Keating Branch of the Gaelic League in Dublin. He was a native Irish speaker and he organised Irish classes in the town. He was never in the I.R.B. The Young Ireland Society brought speakers to Macroom and Coachford for the Manchester Martyrs' celebrations. These included Seán MacDiarmada, T.F. O'Sullivan, P.J. Devlin (a G.A.A. man and Labour Organiser from Dublin) and M.J. Doran of Cobh.

The Young Ireland Society had rooms in Castle Street; Irish classes were held there, collections were organised and carried out in the surrounding country districts as well as in the town, and practically all Irish-Ireland activities centred there. The collections were for the National Monument and for John R. O'Sullivan (The Bard), a prisoner of the Land League days who was released about that time. He had served 17 years of a 24 years' sentence.

The I.R.B. organisation in Macroom and the districts adjoining it died out as an active body in the years 1910 to 1912. The main reason was that most of the members were suspended, one by one, for taking part in politics; some on the Redmondite and some on the O'Brienite side. The organisation did not exist again until I re-organised it after 1916. I think Sean O'Hegarty was in touch with Henry A. Brown, Nutleys, about 1910 or 1911, but there was no re-organisation at that time.

Sean MacDiarmada visited Macroom on some organising work about 1910. Sean O'Kelleher and I went to Coachford with him. It may

have been in connection with "Irish Freedom" or Sinn Fein. I was distributing "Irish Freedom". As far as I remember, he did not discuss the I.R.B. with me at the time. He did not do any organising work, nor was any attempt made to re-organise the I.R.B. then.

The Volunteer organisation was started in Macroom soon after the start in Cork, and, when the Redmondite supporters came into it, four Companies were organised in the town and its immediate neighbourhood. There was a Committee in control at this time, of which Martin Fitzgerald was the Chairman and John O'Shea the Secretary.

When the Split came, practically the whole body decided to accept Redmond's leadership. I was the only Officer of the Volunteers before the Split to join the Irish Volunteers. The National Volunteers continued to maintain their organisation after the Split and the few Irish Volunteers who were left in the town continued to meet, but took no steps openly to organise. We felt that opposition would only tend to keep the National Volunteers alive, and we were advised by Seán Nolan of Cork to bide our time. Charlie Brown, whose sympathies were entirely with us, continued to train with the National Volunteers, but was always ready to come over to us as soon as we made a start again.

The position in the country districts around Macroom was much the same, and the first re-organisation of the Irish Volunteers began in Clondrohid at the end of 1914. Seamus Murphy and Seán Nolan of Cork came out there organising frequently on Sundays.

In the spring or Summer of 1915 we re-started in Macroom, and Charlie Brown immediately joined us. Numbers were small at first, but by the end of the year we had about 30 Volunteers in the town. We took part in the Manchester Martyrs' demonstration in Cork in November, 1915. The strengths of the Companies from this area taking part were approximately:-

Macroom:	30
Kilmurray:	20
Kilnamartyra:	20
Clondrohid:	20
Ballinagree:	20
Carriganimma:	30

We had no service rifles; we had some miniatures and some shot guns, but I do not think we were all armed. We had bought all the shot guns that were available in Macroom.

At the end of 1915 or early 1916 we took part in an exercise at Bealnablath in which Units from Cork City and other places were engaged. Daithi Barry was Brigade Adjutant at the time.

John Lynch from the Macroom Company attended the Officers' training class in Sheares' Street Hall, Cork, in January, 1916. We took part in the St. Patrick's Day parade in Cork in 1916, with about the same strengths as we had in the previous November.

There was little change in the strengths of the Macroom Company up to Easter, 1916. Training had been carried on regularly; there were weekly parades and Sunday marches or exercises and the attendance was always very good. Paddy Trahey, Paddy Corkery, Seán Murphy, Seamus Murphy and Seán Nolan used to visit us frequently. We had no service rifles at Easter, 1916, and had very little additional arms over what we had at November, 1915.

The Officers of the Macroom Company at Easter, 1916, were:-

Captain:	Dan Corkery.
1st Lieut.:	John Lynch.
2nd Lieut.:	Stephen O'Connor.
Adjutant:	Charles Brown.
Quartermaster:	

Section Commander: Denis Creedon.

Some time during Holy Week, 1916, I got orders from the Brigade for the Easter exercises. I was not in Cork and I do not remember how I got the orders, whether it was in writing or was brought verbally. I do not remember that we sent anyone to Cork. Orders were to the effect that the Macroom Company was to march to Carriganimma and be there by 12 noon on Easter Sunday. We were to have all available arms and equipment and rations for three days. We were to remain at Carriganimma until we got further orders. I do not remember whether I got the orders for the other Companies in the area, or whether they were sent to them direct. We suspected that something unusual was intended, but we had no definite information that anything more than a week-end exercise was to take place.

The total strength of the Macroom Company at Carriganimma on Easter Sunday was 25, Officers and men. The following are the names:-

Daniel Corkery.  
Charles Browne.  
John Lynch.  
Stephen O'Connor.  
Patrick O'Connor.  
Denis Creedon.  
Jeremiah Horgan.  
Dan J. Murphy.  
John Fitzgerald.  
William Casey.  
Denis Murphy.  
John Cronin.  
Dan Cronin.  
Denis Kelleher.  
Jack Cunningham.  
Thade Murphy.  
Jack Murphy.  
Timothy Healy.  
John Mullane.  
John Long.  
Dan Sheehan.  
Tim Callaghan.  
Willie Kelleher.  
Louie Droumey (Toames).  
Jeremiah Lucey.

We did some exercises. The day was very wet and we got shelter in Walsh's farmhouse. Seán Nolan came but I do not remember that he brought any message. No orders came to us until nearly dusk, between 9 and 10 o'clock, when Michael Lynch arrived on a motor cycle. He told us the instructions were cancelled and we were to return home. We all marched back to Macroom. Tomás MacCurtain or Terence MacSwiney did not visit us at Carriganimma that day.

On Easter Monday a man named Tadhg O'Leary from Ballingeary, who worked in Suttons, brought me a verbal message from Seán Murphy, the Brigade Quartermaster, from Cork, to the effect that fighting was taking place in Dublin and that we were to stand to arms. I understood he was going on to Ballingeary. The Macroom Company stood to arms for the remainder of the week. We had a room in the town and the men were either there or quickly available. On Easter Monday night Miss Mary MacSwiney and Miss Cashell arrived in Macroom on the 7 o'clock train from Cork. They were looking for Tomás MacCurtain and Terence MacSwiney and thought perhaps they were at Ballingeary. I had no information of their movements. I got a covered car and sent John Lynch to Ballingeary with Miss MacSwiney and Miss Cashell. Lynch had no message for MacCurtain or MacSwiney, he merely accompanied the two ladies. When he returned that night he told me that neither MacCurtain nor MacSwiney was at Ballingeary.

On Tuesday or Wednesday a message was brought to me by, I think, Tadhg Barry to the effect that the Cork men intended to move out from the city with their arms and that we were to be in readiness, on receiving an order, to move in towards Cork to meet them. I sent this message to the Companies at Kilmurray, Kilnamartyra, Clondrohid and Ballinagree. During the week there were messages from Cork every day, sometimes twice a day; their general purport was to keep us in touch and I do not remember the details of them. Amongst the messengers who came out to us from Cork were Pat Higgins and Fred Murray.

Late in the week - perhaps Saturday - we got a message from Cork that the surrender had taken place in Dublin and that we were to safeguard our arms. We never got an order to surrender arms. At the same time we got notice of a meeting to be held in the Hall in Sheares' Street, Cork, on Sunday - that is, the Sunday after Easter Sunday. I attended that meeting with John Lynch and someone else from the Macroom Company. I think the other Companies were represented also. As far as I remember, we cycled to Dooniskey and travelled in by train. We were not in time for the start of the meeting. Tomás MacCurtain and Terence MacSwiney were both there. It was the first time I had seen them since before Easter. I do not remember a vote being taken on the surrender of arms but we were told that the surrender had taken place in Dublin and that we should keep the organisation intact and safeguard our arms.

I was arrested on the following Tuesday, 2nd May. John Lynch, Charles Brown, Stephen O'Connor and Paddy O'Connor were also arrested in Macroom. Dan Harrington and Seán Ruadh Riordan had been arrested in Kilnamartyra on the previous Thursday. We intended to attempt to rescue them when they were being brought through Macroom but they were taken through before we had time to make any plans. John Cronin, Macroom Company, and Tom Neville

and John J. Murphy, Dooniskey, were arrested about May 9th.

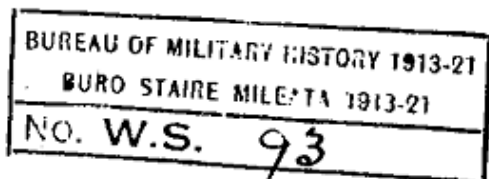
After we were arrested someone told the local Volunteers that if the arms were surrendered we would be released. A meeting was held and it was agreed there that all the arms would be brought to the Volunteer rooms. This was done in order to ensure that any individual Volunteer would not be fooled into surrendering his arms. When all the arms were collected at the rooms they were then taken by a few of the Volunteers and put in places of safety. No arms were surrendered in Macroom.

After arrest we were taken to the Detention Barracks in Cork. We were there about a week and were then taken to Richmond Barracks, Dublin, and afterwards to Frongoch. While in the Detention Barracks at Cork, Canon Cullinane, who was the Chaplain, tried to tell me something, but was only able to say that everything was alright outside. A Sergeant Cummins, who was on duty there, was also friendly. He used to come to the spy-hole in the cell at night and tell me what was happening outside. He told me of Kent's execution and of the fact that we were being moved. He thought we were to be released. I do not think Terence MacSwiney was in the Detention Barracks. The first place I saw him after my arrest was in Frongoch.

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

SIGNED: Dan Coker

DATE: Oct 18<sup>th</sup> 1947



WITNESS: Florence Dowling