

ROINN  COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

## STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. .... 110 .....

## Witness

Denis Daly

## Identity

Member of I.R.B. London 1913.

Member of Kimmage Garrison

## Subject

- (a) Journey to Kerry to erect wireless station, Easter 1916.
- (b) The G.P.O. and Moore St., Easter 1916.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

File No. .... S. 723 .....

Form B.S.M. 2.

# ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 110

STATEMENT OF DENIS DALY, MAIN STREET, CAHERCIVEEN,  
CO. KERRY.

PERIOD: 1912 to EASTER, 1916.

W.S.  
110

I was in the P.O. Service in London and joined the I.R.B. there in 1913. P.S. O'Hegarty was our Head Centre in London. Healy from Kilcummin was Sub-Centre and Cremin from Lissyconnor was in my Circle. Michael Collins and I were close friends and were much together in the years from 1912 to 1916. About the end of 1915 there was a general feeling amongst those of us associated with the I.R.B. that there would be something doing in Ireland in the near future, and a number of us came over.

Immediately after Christmas, 1915, I came home to Caherciveen for a short time, and about the end of February went to Dublin and joined my comrades at Larkfield, Kimmage, where I remained until Easter, 1916. George Plunkett was in charge of the Camp. Four of us were appointed Section Commanders - Seamus Robinson, Peadar Bracken of Tullamore, Seamus Brennan of Tullamore, and myself.

Collins was not staying in Larkfield, he lived out in private digs, but was in and out of Larkfield continuously. I had frequent conversations with him. One evening, about a week before Good Friday, 1916, Collins had a conversation with Con Keating and myself about the possibility of getting a wireless receiving and transmitting set. Keating was a Caherciveen man and a competent wireless operator. Both he and I thought it would be possible to get the required equipment at a Wireless College at Caherciveen of which Maurice Fitzgerald was the proprietor. This building, run as a school for wireless operators, was unoccupied at night. It stood within 100 yards of the R.I.C. barracks. Maurice Fitzgerald had been on the staff of Ballinskelligs Cable Station as an operator.

In the next few days a number of meetings was held to discuss the project at 44 Mountjoy Street. Seán MacDermott, Michael Collins, Con Keating, Dan Sheehan and myself attended these meetings. I think the names were suggested by Collins, who knew all of us. The job was decided upon and the following party detailed:-

Denis Daly (in charge).  
Con Keating.  
Dan Sheehan.  
Charles Monahan.  
Colum O Lochlainn.

Con Keating was the only expert wireless operator in the party, but Sheehan may have had some training in wireless.

On Holy Thursday night at 44 Mountjoy Street we were given final instructions by Seán MacDermott. They were to the effect that the five of us were to proceed to Killarney by train on Good Friday. At a specified time after the arrival of the train in Killarney we were to go to the road junction on the Killarney-Killorglin road, about a quarter of a mile north of the Cathedral, where we would be met by two motor cars with drivers who would have come to that point from Limerick. We were then to proceed in the two cars, via Killorglin, to Caherciveen, force an entrance

to Maurice Fitzgerald's Wireless College there as quickly as possible, remove the necessary equipment to the cars and take it to a point on the Castlemaine-Tralee road where a party of Tralee Volunteers were to take it over. All of us were armed with revolvers. It was estimated that we would be able to complete the mission and hand over the wireless equipment to the Tralee men before daylight on Easter Saturday morning. Keating, Sheehan and Monahan were to stay with the wireless set; I had the option of returning by train to Dublin on Easter Saturday to take part in the Rising if I found it possible to get back. Before leaving Dublin I had decided I would return. I cannot recollect what Ó Lochlainn's position was in this regard, but I think it was similar to my own. However, as things turned out, he had no alternative.

As I understood it at the time, the main purpose of our mission was to enable wireless contact to be made with a German arms ship (I don't think name of vessel was mentioned), which was expected at Fenit on Easter Sunday. This had been mentioned in the discussions with Seán MacDermott. It has been stated that it was also intended to send misleading wireless messages to units of the British Navy on duty round the South West Coast for the purpose of diverting them from Tralee Bay while the landing of arms was in progress. I cannot, from personal knowledge, confirm or deny that there was such an intention. It is possible, but I do not recollect any discussion on the matter. If true, this would pre-suppose that the British Admiralty code was in the possession of some member of our party. I did not have it, but, of course, Con Keating, as the wireless operator, would be the person most likely to have it. I do not know whether he had it in his possession or not. The set was to be erected at Ballyard, Tralee. My responsibility ended when it was handed over to the Tralee men.

The party of five named above left Dublin on the morning train on Good Friday; Monahan, Keating and Sheehan in one compartment, Ó Lochlainn and I in another. Captain J.J. O'Connell travelled on the same train on a mission to Cork and was in the same compartment as Ó Lochlainn and myself as far as Mallow.

On arrival in Killarney the five of us went to Charlie Foley's in New Street, where we had a meal. At the appointed time we went to the road junction outside the town where we were to meet the cars. The cars were there. Both cars were the property of Tommy McInerney of Limerick. He drove one himself and the other was driven by a driver of whose name I do not remember. We had never met either man before. I do not know who arranged that the cars would meet us, but it was probably Con Collins.

I decided that Ó Lochlainn and I would travel in the leading car, going at a comparatively slow pace as we had ample time to reach our destination, that the other car would follow us and that they would keep our tail-lights and headlights in view. It was never intended that we should separate. It was ~~dark~~ <sup>dark</sup> when we started, probably about 8 o'clock. Keating, Monahan and Sheehan were in the second car, driven by McInerney, and, as we had more room in our car, I took the bag of tools which we had brought from Dublin.

About three miles on the Killarney side of Killorglin, I observed that the second car was not following us, and stopped. We waited for about three-quarters of an hour, and, as the car did not arrive, we concluded that it was possible they had taken

the Beaufort road. If they had done so they would have come into the town of Killorglin by a different road to the one we were on, and as we had waited so long they could have passed through the town ahead of us. I decided, therefore, to go on and if we did not find them waiting for us on the other side of the town, to wait there again. We went through Killorglin, saw no trace of the other car, and waited again for about three quarters of an hour on the Caherciveen side of Killorglin.

When the car did not arrive we thought it possible that it was ahead of us and decided to go on. We met a man with a load of turf who told us he had come from Caragh and that no car had passed him on the road. We went on again and met another man who said he had come from Caherciveen and had passed no car on the road. We stopped again at Kells and waited. It was then about 2 a.m. We decided to go on to Caherciveen. About  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles outside the town we were halted by police. They asked us for our names, enquired our business, and made a cursory search of the car. They did not search the bag with the tools, nor ourselves. We had a story prepared for such an emergency. The driver told them he was selling the car to Wharton of Waterville, and that we were medical students who had come with him on the trip. All of us gave false names and addresses. The police were not suspicious and did not question us minutely. Apparently they had then no knowledge of the tragedy at Ballykissane. Neither had we, of course.

We went on towards Caherciveen and stopped just outside the town. Having discussed the situation we were in, we decided that O Lochlainn and I could do nothing to carry out our mission. Neither of us were wireless experts. The other car carried the vital man as far as the dismantling, removal and operation of the wireless set was concerned. That was Con Keating. Sheehan had, I believe, some wireless training, but I do not know whether Monahan had or not. We reasoned that as we had been held up by the police there was a probability that the occupants of the second car had been arrested in Killorglin.

We decided, therefore, to try and get back to Dublin. We drove through Caherciveen, along the Waterville road as far as the new chapel, where we turned off and crossed Ballaghsheen pass into Glencar, through Beaufort, and thence into Killarney. I knew the whole district around Killarney, Killorglin and Caherciveen fairly well.

The car broke down just outside the town of Killarney. Leaving it and the driver there, O Lochlainn and I, taking the bag of tools with us, walked into the Railway Station and were in time to get the morning train to Dublin. When changing trains at Mallow Station we met Mick Lynch, a brother of Diarmuid's, who told us that a man had been arrested and he believed he was Roger Casement. On Saturday night we brought the bag of tools to 44, Mountjoy Street and reported to Seán MacDermott and Michael Collins. They were then aware of Casement's arrest.

The first definite news I got of what had happened to Keating, Sheehan, Monahan, and McInerney in the second car was when I saw a report of the accident at Ballykissane Pier on the "Sunday Independent" on Easter Sunday. My opinion still is that they took the Beaufort road on Good Friday night, thus losing contact with us in the first car, and coming into Killorglin on a road that went along directly to Ballykissane Pier.

On Easter Monday we were mobilised in front of Liberty Hall. I was in charge of the Section which acted as a guard for the car in which members of the Provisional Government travelled from Liberty Hall to the G.P.O. There may have been two cars, I am not certain on the point, but the car on which my Section acted as guard was an open touring car driven by the O'Rahilly. Pearse and Connolly were seated in front, and Tom Clarke, Seán MacDermott and Joseph Plunkett in the back.

In the G.P.O. my Section was stationed on the ground floor, south of the main entrance, at first, but we were detailed for various duties during the week. While barricading the windows and main door with sandbags, a patrol of Cavalry came south along O'Connell Street. There was an exchange of shots, as a result of which the patrol suffered heavy casualties. The few survivors retreated northwards.

I think it was on Tuesday that some of us were sent to raid premises in the Dame Street area for electrical supplies. On the same day we were sent on a mission to the Four Courts. There was an exchange of written dispatches anyway. On that evening we paid several visits to Findlaters for food supplies. The open tourer was our means of transport on all these trips. On Monday and Tuesday nights we were sent out a few times by Pearse to disperse looters from business houses in the Henry Street area. Enormous damage had been done. Men, women and even children seemed to have gone mad. In the cellars of one house in Henry Street I saw them wading in wine more than a foot deep.

On Wednesday about a dozen of us were sent out to occupy premises in the corner of Abbey Street, which turned out to be a lock-up shop containing motor and cycling accessories. Connolly and Diarmuid Lynch conveyed us through an alley-way connecting the G.P.O. with Abbey Street. I was informed later that Connolly was shot at the alley exit just after we had left. Diarmuid Lynch led us to our objective. After gaining an entrance he left Seán Milroy in charge, with instructions to hold the post until the receipt of a further order from the G.P.O. Nothing very eventful happened while we were there. The position was, however, a bit exposed and there was continued sniping. On Thursday evening Diarmuid Lynch came and brought us back under fire to the G.P.O. We had no food during the time we were away from G.H.Q. Later that evening our party was sent to relieve the men holding positions on the roof of the G.P.O. We had strict orders not to fire from there, although we could see British troops within range. Very early on Friday morning we were withdrawn, and, as far as I can recollect, we were not replaced. When about midday the roof was on fire and all attempts to quell the flames, with the limited apparatus at our disposal, had failed, it was decided to vacate the G.P.O. and acquire a new General H.Q. at Williams and Woods in Parnell Street. I happened to be one of the party, numbering about 40, selected for this purpose. We paraded in Henry Street in charge of The O'Rahilly and were addressed by Pearse, who explained our mission. We were in two files, each file to take a side of Moore Street, up which we were to go at the double. My position was about the centre of the left file. No sooner had we entered Moore Street than we came under heavy fire. The O'Rahilly was shot and everyone in front of me was shot down. A man named McGrath and I got into a doorway about 100 yards from the British barricade in Parnell Street. It was impossible to go forward, so we tried to move back towards the G.P.O. We heard shouts of "Come this way", and, following their directions, we entered Cole's Lane and got into the rear of Williams' grocery shop in Henry Street. It was occupied by about ten men. Jim Sullivan was in charge. The only others I can remember were Mick McGrath, Eamon Dore and a man named Daly. Tom Donoghue had

given me a loaf of bread before we left the G.P.O. That was all the food the Section had on Friday night. We decided there that we would continue the attempt to reach Williams and Woods. We moved out and along Cole's Lane. A fusilade came from the houses covering it. Two were slightly wounded and I fell but found I was not hit. We had to move back into Williams again, and were there at the surrender. During the night the whole block seemed to be on fire and we had to remain in Williams,

After the surrender we were brought to the grounds of the Rotunda and kept there in the open overnight. Next day we were taken to Richmond Barracks. In Richmond, J.J. Walsh was sitting next to me on the floor against the wall when he was called out for identification.

I was called out soon afterwards. At the door there were two Sergeants and an Officer. I recognised the two Sergeants as two prisoners who had been handed over to me in O'Connell Street early in the week, and whom I had brought into the G.P.O. as prisoners. There was an instruction about prisoners that their boots should be removed. I had the boots of the two Sergeants taken from them after they were brought into the G.P.O. Later the same day I had visited them and they complained of the cold. I reported the matter to Michael Collins. He went to see them, found they were two Cork men, had their boots restored to them and got them some tea. They evidently remembered me for when I was brought up for identification they had a long talk with the Officer and I was sent back. I was not tried but was interned in Stafford Jail and Frongoch until the general release at Christmas, 1916.

SIGNED:

Denis Daly.

DATE:

3rd April 1948.

WITNESS:

Florence Donoghue.

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