

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 126

STATEMENT OF JACK MCGALEY, THE COURTHOUSE,  
TRALEE, CO. KERRY.

PERIOD: EASTER 1916.

UNIT: TRALEE BATTALION, IRISH VOLUNTEERS.

On Holy Thursday 1916, I was released from Tralee Jail, after serving a sentence of three months' imprisonment with hard labour under D.O.R.A.

Mick Hogan of Boherbee and I decided we would go for a bit of a stroll on Good Friday. When we reached Moyderwell Cross, Tralee, we were called by Paddy Cahill and ordered to go back home and get our bicycles and report to Michael J. O'Connor at the Hibernian Hall, The Square, Tralee, where we were to get instructions. Both of us were members of the Cycle Corps attached to the Tralee Battalion. When we arrived at the Square about 10.30 a.m. there were two other members of the Cycle Corps there before us, Moss Switzer and a man named Brennan, whose christian name I cannot recall. Michael J. O'Connor gave each of us a loaded revolver. He told us we were to go to Banna and try and get in touch with Austin Stack who had already gone in that direction. Hogan and I went by Strand Street, Switzer and Brennan went the Ardfert road and we joined up before we reached Ardfert. It would then be between about 11.30 and 12 noon.

After passing Ardfert village we noticed a few people on the ditches looking down towards the strand. We continued on until we reached the strand. We parked our bicycles and climbed one of the highest of the sandhills. We looked all round but there was no sign of anyone on the strand. Neither of us had ever fired a shot from a revolver, and we were not too sure of how they worked. We put up a bottle and fired a few shots for the purpose of finding out how the Weapons worked. We stayed there for about a quarter of an hour and then decided to return to Tralee and report. When walking back the Strand road to get our bicycles, I saw a man working in a field and I called him. I asked him the reason why the people we passed on the road were looking down towards the strand. He told me there was a strange ship in the Bay all night showing different coloured lights, that she left early in the morning and that another ship seemed to be following her. He said a lot of Germans had landed back at the strand and that the R.I.C. had captured some of them and taken them to Ardfert Barracks.

I thanked him and we cycled on towards Ardfert. On the main road we met two R.I.C. men from Tralee cycling towards Banna. As we were cycling on the foot-path Brennan said, "If they try to stop us, fire on them". They did not stop us. We arrived in Ardfert village and went in to Sullivan's public-house for refreshments. Whilst there we heard that a very tall man wearing a beard, had been taken into the R.I.C. Barracks, and also that a boat was in the Barrack yard. All the talk seemed to point to a German landing. We decided to have a look at the boat and we crossed the road and opened the gate of the Barrack yard and walked in. We were near the boat when an R.I.C. man came out and ordered us out of the yard. We came out, got our bicycles and cycled back to Tralee. I think we met a few R.I.C. men on our way back.

it was suggested

but we decided not to do so

J. McGaley

It was about 3 or 3.30 p.m. when we got back to Tralee. Moss Switzer and I cycled to the Rink, Volunteer Headquarters, to report to Paddy Cahill. When we arrived at the Rink there was no senior officer there. We then went to Paddy Hogan's for a drink and a few sandwiches. I met Danny Healy who was Captain "C" Company, Tralee Battalion, and next in charge to Paddy Cahill. I reported to him what we had seen and heard. He said it was bad news, that the most important man connected with the Volunteer movement was captured. I said, "Is it Monteith?" and he replied, "Worse still, it is Casement" and you keep your mouth shut". We went back to the Rink later that evening.

I understand cyclists were sent on other errands that day by Paddy Cahill. Eugene Hogan and Jack Fleming to Killorglin to signal to the car which ~~held~~ <sup>went</sup> over the pier at Ballykissane.

When speaking to Paddy Cahill about two years ago and giving him the details which I have given above, he said if he knew things were so close that Good Friday morning, he would have gone to Banna with us himself.

On Easter Sunday 1916, Paddy Cahill gave me a verbal message to take to Listowel. The message was: - "All arrangements for tomorrow cancelled". Eoin MacNeill. - I cycled to Listowel and delivered this message to the O/C. of the Listowel Battalion.

Signature

Jack W. Galey

Date

10th May 1948.

Witness

Flavence Donohue

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