

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRE ÉIRE 1913-21

No. W.S. 144



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ROINN COSANTA.

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

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Statement by

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Gaggin, Bandon,
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STATEMENT OF MICHAEL WALSH, GAGGIN, BANDON,
CO. CORK.

PERIOD: MAY, 1915 TO EASTER, 1916.

UNIT: CLOGOUGH COMPANY, I.V.

In May, 1915, the Company of Irish Volunteers was started for Clogough and Gaggin. I went East and attended a parade of the Ballinadee Company. I met Terence MacSwiney and Tom and Seán Hales there. Terence MacSwiney asked me if we could form a Company. We decided to call a public meeting in Clogough after Mass on a Sunday about the end of May. Terence MacSwiney spoke to all who remained to hear him after Mass. 15 or 16 of us from Gaggin had gone there and we got 5 or 6 men in Clogough. We made a start then with a Company of about 20 or so. Terence MacSwiney and Fred Murray were out with us again before Easter, 1916.

Officers were elected at an early stage and they continued to hold office down to Easter, 1916.

Eugene Walsh:	Captain.
Michael Hennessy (Skafé):	1st Lieutenant.
Timothy Sexton do	2nd Lieutenant.

I was organiser. There was no Adjutant or Quartermaster.

The strength of the Company went up to about 60 in 1916. We had a Section in Ballinascorthy and a Section (to) Aichill. Ballinadee and Clogough Companies went on a route march (to) Aichill early in 1916 and a Company was organised there on this Sunday route march. Terence MacSwiney spoke there.

Parades were held two or three times a week and a route march or exercise on every Sunday. We had no ex-servicemen in the Company and had to do the best we could with drill from what we were able to get ourselves out of drill books. Night parades were sometimes held to adjoining areas and these and the Sunday parades were partly for the purpose of recruiting as well as for training. A Sunday parade was held in Barryroe in the last week of November, 1915. Terence MacSwiney was there with the Ballinadee Company. He addressed a meeting at which Jeremiah O'Brien presided. A Section was formed but made little progress until 1917. Sunday parades were also held to Ardfield and Enniskeane in the Winter of 1915-16. About 60 men from the Clogough Company attended the St. Patrick's Day parade in Cork in 1916 and, I think, about the same number at the Manchester Martyrs' parade in 1915.

The arms which we had at Easter, 1916, were: one Mauser rifle, 25 single-barrelled shot guns, with 500 rounds of ammunition, 3 old rifles, a Spanish revolver and 12 pikes. The pikes were made locally by a blacksmith names Thomas Collins of Clashmore, Desertserges; they had 9ft. ash handles. The Mauser rifle we got

from Ballinadee in exchange for a service rifle which we had taken off a British soldier home on leave. The police were looking for this service rifle and we gave it to Ballinadee in exchange for the Mauser. I am not sure if bayonets were fixed to the shotguns at that time. I think it was probably after 1916 that we made bayonets for the shot guns. I had purchased the Spanish revolver myself and had bought the three old rifles from Flyer Nyhan's father immediately before Easter, 1916. We had plenty of cartridges as we had made our own buckshot and filled a number of cartridges with them. I had a machine for filling cartridges. I had also about 10 lbs. of gelignite, which I used in my own business, and some fuse.

All the men had belts, bandoliers and caps. Only two had full uniform. The men paid 3d a week into a fund for equipment and out of this fund the equipment was purchased.

The men who paraded on Easter Sunday, 1916, as far as I can remember, are:-

Michael Walsh,	Gaggin.
Eugene Walsh	"
Jeremiah Canniffe	"
Patrick Canniffe	"
Cornelius Canniffe	"
Jeremiah Harte	"
Patrick O'Neill	"
Cornelius Donovan	Cashel.
Timoght Donovan	"
James McCarthy	Moulbrack.
Timothy Sexton	Skafe.
John Crowley,	Burren.
Denis Donovan	Clogough.
Michael Buckley	"
John O'Brien	Mayfield.
William Hurley	Ballinascarthy.
JOHN SWINEY	GAGGIN

These all marched to Macroom. There were some others, and some who arrived late for the parade, to the number of about thirty altogether, but I am unable to get the names. They were mostly farmers' boys who have long since left the district.

We got the orders for Easter, 1916, verbally from Ballinadee. There was regular communication between this house and Tom Hales at Ballinadee. I, or some member of the family, used to go over frequently, and Tom, Seán and Willie Hales used to come here. The orders were that we were to parade with all arms, ammunition and equipment and one or two days' rations. We got that order on the Wednesday or Thursday of Holy Week. We had reason to think it was something more than an ordinary parade. A few of us who were in close touch with Seán Hales had been given to understand it was serious. We were told we were to go to Macroom but we did not know where we were to go beyond that.

We assembled at Gaggin about 7 o'clock on Easter Sunday morning and went across the fields to Tinkers' Cross. Between there and Kilmurray we met the Ballinadee Company and marched with them to Kilmurray where we had Mass. Going into Macroom from there Tom Hales was in charge and my brother second-in-charge. Seán Hales and I were vanguard. We met a policeman

coming towards us with a knapsack and a bicycle. I asked Seán would we let him pass. He said he had no orders and we were to let him pass. We went into Macroom and were dismissed there.

We came back to Crookstown in the train. The evening was so wet most of the Company stayed there until the early hours of Monday morning. Some marched back to their own areas as far as Clogough and Ballinascorthy - over 16 miles. The men were very fit. They had had twelve months' training at long marches.

The men generally felt very disappointed at the cancellation of whatever action was intended on Easter Sunday. They were most enthusiastic going out, although they did not know what they were going out for. They were ready and anxious to take part in whatever was going on.

I have a very clear recollection of travelling by train to Clonakilty on the Tuesday after Easter Monday and of purchasing two shot guns from Atkins and Company. The Manager, John Reilly, made them up in canvas and sent them to the station. I remember well the policeman on duty travelling with me in the same carriage to Gaggin.

On the Tuesday evening of Easter Week word came from Ballinadee to mobilise and remain under arms during the week. There was a suggestion, which was discussed between Tom and Seán Hales and ourselves, that we would be called on to go in and bring out the Cork City men, with what arms they had, some night during the week. We remained under arms until the Tuesday of the following week, when the raids began. No word had come to us from Cork in the meantime.

The night of the raid at Ballinadee, Seán Hales was here with me. One of the Ballinadee men came here early in the morning of the raid, without a coat, shoe or stocking. His name was Con Collins and he brought word to Seán Hales and myself of the raid. Several shots had been fired at him when he escaped from his own house. Seán and I left here and went West to the South of Ballineen and stayed there at a friend's house for a week. I used to come back at night for news. When I arrived early one morning I found my own house surrounded by military and my brother Dan was arrested and interned. A number of other members of the Company were on the run. Timothy Sexton, Skafe, was arrested on the 14th of May and he and my brother were the only two arrested in the Company area.

Tom Hales had sent an order to put the arms safely away and this had been done. No arms were captured in the raids.

There was never a Redmondite Company of the Volunteers in this area. The majority of the people in the locality were O'Brienites. There was some small Fianna organisation - two or three boys, one of whom was Paul Sweeney. My brother Eugene attended the Course in Sheares Street in January, 1916.

SIGNED:

Michael Walsh

DATE:

Oct 4th 1947