

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BUREAU STAIRS MILITARY 1913-21

No. W.S. 145

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 145

Witness

Sean Corr

Identity

Member of I.R.B., I.V. and I.R.A. 1915-1921.

Subject

National activities, Carrickmore District
Co. Tyrone from 1906

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil

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STATEMENT BY SEAN CORR

Late of Carrickmore. Co. Tyrone. Now living in Cabra,
Dublin.

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Sinn Fein was organised in Carrickmore Parish, County Tyrone, in 1906. The organisation was then known as the Dungannon Club. There was at this time an I.R.B. Centre in Carrickmore composed of the following members:- Dr. Patrick McCartan, Michael McCartan, Christy Meenagh, Peter Fox, James McElduff, Patrick Marshal, James Conway, Tom McNally, Patrick McNally, Patrick Quinn and Bernard McCartan.

Bulmer Hobson addressed a meeting of the Dungannon Club in 1906 or 1907. The Chairman of the Club, who presided at the meeting, was a local Justice of the Peace who did not know that the men behind the Club and the men who were responsible for getting Bulmer Hobson to address the Club meeting were the I.R.B. organisation. The Chairman was particularly keen on the objects of the Dungannon Clubs, but would not in any way allow himself to be consciously associated with the I.R.B. The Dungannon Club remained in existence up to the starting of the National Volunteers in the area.

At the start of the Volunteers in this area the organisation was known as the National Volunteers, and no question arose of a division in the Volunteer organisation until the split in September 1914. The parish of Carrickmore comprises eighteen townlands. There were six Companies of Volunteers in the parish, namely, Creggan, Loughmacrory, Carrickmore, Innishatieve, Tromague and Mullaghslin. These Companies were nearly all controlled by the A.O.H. There were A.O.H. Divisions in all the above Company districts except in Tromague and Carrickmore.

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In those later 2 companies the A.O.H. did not control the Volunteers, but were run by members of the I.R.B. with some A.O.H. personnel in each Company.

Roger Casement came to Carrickmore some time before the Split in 1914. He was accompanied by Captain White. Captain White took charge of a parade of all Volunteer Companies in the parish and put them through some military exercises. Then Casement addressed the parade. I cannot remember the trend of his address.

On the 3rd or 4th August 1914 a great review of the Volunteers took place in Greencastle, Co. Tyrone. Volunteers from the following parishes took part in this Review:- Greencastle, Kildress, Carrickmore, Pomeroy and, I think, Dunmoyle. There were about 3,000 men in this Review. All the Volunteers camped out on a mountainside near Greencastle the night before and paraded next morning for Mass at Greencastle. Darrell Figgis and Captain White took the salute at this Review. This was the last big rally of the Volunteers in Tyrone before the split.

The split took place late in Sept. 1914. All drilling stopped in the parish of Carrickmore except the Tromogue Company which continued drilling as all Company members were Republicans. In Carrickmore Camp ^{any} the Hibernian supporters left the Camp ^{any} and the rest carried on as Irish Volunteers. All the other Companies in the parish became disorganised. The Hibernian elements who left the Volunteers became inactive. I believe that the followers of John Redmond at this time believed that remaining in the National Volunteers might involve a risk of being drafted into the British Army for foreign service.

About October 1914, I was approached to join the I.R.B. and did so. Before joining the I.R.B. I was associating with I.R.B. members. I was given pamphlets and books which all contained

Republican propaganda. Joseph McGarrity was a native of Carrickmore and he was in touch with the local I.R.B. organisation and sent home to local members of the I.R.B. each issue of The Irish World and The Gaelic American. I got those papers to read. The I.R.B. Centre I joined held their meetings in Carrickmore Village in the house of Peter Fox. At the time of joining there were 11 members in the Circle - Dr. P. McCartan, Eskerboy; Barney McCartan, Eskerboy; Michael McCartan, V.S., Altanagh; James McElduff, Aughiogan; Patrick Quinn, Carrickmore; Peter Fox Carrickmore; Tom McNally, Carrickmore; Patrick Marshal, Carrickmore; James Conway, Tomagan; Chris. Meenagh, Craggandeveshy and John Gormley, Carrickmore. This was the only Circle operating in my area at the time I joined the organisation.

Shortly after I joined the I.R.B. I got a few men into the organisation in my home district, Tromague, and in a short time I was made Centre of Tromague. After becoming Centre I got all the local Company of Irish Volunteers sworn into the I.R.B. - about 30 in all. I was in charge of Tromague Company at this time. I got a service rifle from Dr. McCartan and took it into the Company area and trained the Company in its use.

In the Spring of 1915, the portion of the Carrickmore Coy. who left the National Volunteers at the split amalgamated with Tromague and formed a larger unit of about 70 men. We drilled and trained during the Spring and Summer of 1915. About July 1915, the Tromague and Carrickmore Companies were again divided into separate units. At the time of this division a Company was formed at Six-mile-cross with men from Dunmoyle in the Company. This Company was known as Six-mile-cross and Dunmoyle. The officers of the 3 Companies were:-

Tromague Company	Captain	Sean Corr
	Adjt.	James Grogan
	Q.M.	John Daly
Carrickmore Company	Captain	John Gormley
	Adjt.	Patrick Marshal
	Q.M.	James McElduff.

Six-mile-cross and
Dunmoyle Company

Captain Hugh McRory
Adj. Hugh Rodgers
Q.M. Bob Slane

Hugh McRory, Captain of Dunmoyle Coy., was in America and served as an officer in the American Army.

A training camp was held in Tromogue for the training of officers and volunteers in July 1915. The following officers from outside Tyrone area attended this camp:- J.J. O'Connell, (Ginger), G.H.Q., Dublin; Michael Staines, Dublin; Herbert Moore Pim, Belfast; Jerry Barnes and his brother from Belfast; Joseph O'Dogherty, Derry; George Irvine, Enniskillen; Tom Kerr, Liverpool, who was over in Ireland evading conscription in England; Michael Kennedy, Tipperary; Dr. Dundon, Carlow. Amongst the local officers in the Camp were Dr. Patrick McCartan and Captain Hugh McRory (American Officer). The camp lasted for 10 days. During the training at this camp a District Inspector of the R.I. from Dungannon came to the camp to serve a deportation order on Herbert Moore Pim. Bernard McCartan held ^uup the D.I. with a revolver and refused him permission to enter the camp grounds. Mr. Pim came out to the D.I. and they had a conversation. I do not know what passed between them.

There was trouble in getting suitable grounds for holding this camp. An old farmer named John O'Neill of Sluggan ^{offered} kindly // suitable grounds. This man claimed direct descent from the O'Neills, Clan Chiefs of Tyrone, and considered it his patriotic duty to do something to help the cause.

After the week's training in Tromogue, a training camp was started in Donoughmore which also lasted a week. An amusing incident happened during the training at Tromogue, George Irvine, who was a Protestant, went to Church Service from the camp wearing Irish Volunteer uniform. The parson approached him and inquired what regiment he belonged to. George replied "The Irish Volunteer". The parson commented "Oh, is that the way".

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At the close of the training in the camp a cycle parade from the camp proceeded through Castlecaulfield to Dungannon and back to Donoughmore led by J.J. O'Connell. The Orangemen in Castlecaulfield broke glass on the roads after we passed but we did not return that way and no other incident occurred to disturb the routine of our work. On our return to Donoughmore the parade was reviewed. The successful holding of those training camps in districts containing large Orange populations created a feeling of satisfaction that the Volunteers were making progress and that the Nation was again on the march.

All through the Winter of 1915 and the Spring of 1916 we continued our drilling and training. Money was collected for the arms fund and equipment. About this time an incident happened at Mullaghislin School. We advertised holding a concert there. The concert was proclaimed by the R.I.C. About 30 or 40 R.I.C. arrived. The A.O.H., who were opposed to us at this time, started to throw stones at the school in which we were holding the concert in defiance of the proclamation. A few of the volunteers were armed and they fired a few shots. After this we formed up the volunteers in military formation and marched home with our concert party and left the R.I.C. and the trouble-making A.O.H. dumbfounded.

Before the 17th March 1916, Dr. McCartan decided that we should carry out a stunt to give the police in Carrickmore something to worry about. Sergeant English, who was in charge of the local barracks, was continually watching us and trying by all means to get information about the Volunteers. He went as far as sending his daughter to the Gaelic League class, not to learn the language, but to listen in to anything that might be useful for him. The plan that Dr. McCartan suggested and that we carried out on Easter Sunday was the following:- We mobilised about 2 miles from the town. Dr. McCartan arrived with a lorry load of rifles. I don't know where he got the rifles. There were about

100 men mobilised and each man was handed a rifle. We were divided up into small sections and each section approached the town on different roads. Our movement on the town was synchronised so that our whole forces would arrive at a selected place and march through the town in one compact body. The plan was carried out without a hitch and the police got the shock of their lives to see a large body of apparently fully armed men passing through Carrickmore.

A branch of the Cumann na mBan was organised in Carrickmore about early 1915. There were about 30 members in the Branch. In addition to the members of the local Branch other ladies from outlying districts such as Beragh, Sixmilecross and Greencastle attended meeting of the Cumann na mBan in Carrickmore. Money was collected, flag days organised, classes for first aid were regularly held.

Amongst the prominent workers in the Cumann na mBan were - Mary Jane McCartan, Mary A. Laughran, Minnie Daly, Lena Laughran, Sarah Corr, and Bridget McCartan, all from Carrickmore; Aggie Owens, Cassie Owens, Josephine Owens from Beragh and Mrs. McCullough, Greencastle.

On Holy Saturday, 1916, we got orders to mobilise on Easter Sunday at Carrickmore at 7 p.m. Before Holy Saturday there were vague reports going about that a Rising was soon to take place - that German help was coming and that arms were being run into the country. There was nothing definite or authoritative in those rumours. The order to mobilise on Easter Sunday, however, gave me the impression that we were on the eve of action. I was not told this by any person. On Holy Saturday we all went to confession and on Sunday morning received Holy Communion.

We carried out the mobilisation on Sunday evening at Carrickmore Old School. Carrickmore and Tromague Companies took part, between 50 and 60 men from the 2 companies. This mobilisation

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was carried out without arms as the arms were within convenient reach. It was not usual to carry arms for a mobilisation. We always carried arms when we were ordered on a route march. About 10 p.m. on Sunday night we got an order to demobilise and to re-mobilise on Monday night at Carrickmore and Tromague.

On Monday night Tom McGurk and John Daly and myself went to Dr. McCartan's house at Eskerboy. The Carrickmore Company mobilised at Carrickmore and Tromague Company mobilised at Tromague. Men came from Greencastle Company area to Carrickmore Old Schoolhouse.

When I and my two comrades arrived at Dr. McCartan's house a meeting was in progress. The following men took part in this meeting: Dr. McCartan, Father Daly, Father Coyle, Herbert Moore Pim and some other men I did not know. Some time after we arrived at Dr. McCartan's house the doctor came out and invited the 3 of us into the room in which the meeting was being held. We were wet through by heavy rain and our clothes needed drying at a fire. A discussion was going on about seizing explosives from Carrickmore quarry. It was decided eventually that the explosives would not be seized that night. I got the impression from what I heard at the meeting that the volunteers were to remain mobilised from Monday night onwards. The meeting terminated about an hour after we arrived at the meeting place. At its close Dr. McCartan came to us and told us that we were to return home and hold ourselves available for further mobilisation.

On Monday night the Tromague Company were at Daly's Dry Arch. Carrickmore Company were joined by Greencastle Company, mobilised at the schoolhouse, Carrickmore, and stayed up to the early hours of Tuesday morning. I heard that Dungannon, Donoughmore and other sections arrived at Tromague in the early hours of Tuesday morning. They could not contact any other Volunteers and they decided to return home.

We proceeded to our home districts on Monday night and

and remained there upto Friday of Easter Week. A lot of the men did not sleep at home during Easter Week.

At the end of Easter Week a big raid was carried out by R.I.C. and British military. Some guns and ammunition were captured at the house of Dr. McCartan. The following Volunteers were arrested - James Grogan, James McElduff, Bernard McCartan, Peter Fox, Hugh Rodgers, Bob Slane, Captain McRory. Doctor McCartan went on the run and was never captured. I heard at the time a strange report about Herbert Moore Pim; that he was seen at Carrickmore station on Thursday in conversation with Sergeant English of the local R.I.C.

Dr. McCartan spent a lot of time and money in organising the Volunteers and equipping them. A member of Greencastle Coy. - McNaney - drove a car to Dublin to P.H. Pearse's house and returned safely. I can't remember if this drive took place at the end of Holy Week or during Easter Week. He was Section Leader of the Greencastle Coy. I.V. and a member of the I.R.B.

I was evading arrest for about 6 months after Easter Week.

Signed: Sean Scorr

Date: 20th September, 1948,

Witnessed: John Trebov
Date: 20/9/48

