

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRÉ MIL 1913-21

No. W.S. 146

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 146

Witness

Diarmuid Grean

Identity

Founder-member of I.V. Tralee, Co. Kerry.

Subject

Tralee Coy. I.V. 1913-1914.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil

File No. ... 8.784

Form B S M 2

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Military History Bureau
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I enclose herewith signed statements
taken by Major O Donoghue last April.

I told Major O Donoghue that of
the different versions prevailed even here
of the basement landing on King and I
suggested how important it is that a
true version of this affair - as far as
possible - should be on record. I
put him in touch with a man named
Morarty who was the driver of the
motor car - that took Black & Beverly
on that fateful morning in search of
fire-vent. I believe Major Donoghue
took a statement from Morarty and
it is now suggested I should see it -
I have not yet seen it if it was taken.

The matter of the And's arrival could also
I think be cleared. Monteth in his book
and also I think Splendor, the former Capt-
states word was sent that the And's should
arrive in Tasee Bay within a certain period.
It has been sought to make it appear that
the Tasee people were informed that it
would arrive on a certain date. It
should be possible to show that it is
a matter that most people are anxious
to have cleared. Most people are gone over
the way, basement was lost in clearing
and the way it was built.

It should be possible to ensure that recent
history (that is within the ^{memory} of many people now
alive) include much of our historical record
should ~~not~~ make National Heroes out of
~~the~~ bunglers and incompetents.

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BUREAU STAIRS MILITARY 1913-21

No. W.S.

STATEMENT OF DIARMUID GREAN, SPA LODGE,
SPA, TRALEE, CO. KERRY.

PERIOD: 1913 to JULY, 1914.

UNIT: TRALEE BATTALION, I.V.

I had known The O'Rahilly intimately through the Gaelic League for some time before the start of the Irish Volunteers. Immediately the first proposals for formation appeared in the press I wrote to him, and a little later had a consultation with him in reference to the matter. After the inaugural meeting was held in the Rotunda, Dublin, I wrote to him again and he sent me full particulars and information on the method of initiating and organising the new force. I showed these communications to Father Charlie Brennan, and there were some discussions with him and a few others on the proposal to make a start in Tralee.

Possibly as a result of a communication from The O'Rahilly, Austin Stack and I attended a Volunteer meeting in Dublin at which a large number of country representatives were present. That meeting is associated in my recollection with a G.A.A. match or meeting and must have taken place on the same day as some G.A.A. event. Immediately on our return to Tralee we called the public meeting for the formation of the Volunteers locally at the County Hall, Tralee. It was probably in the first week of December, 1913.

I sent out circulars of invitation to the meeting to individuals and to all national organisations in Tralee, such as G.A.A. Clubs, Gaelic League Branches, the Irish Club, the A.O.H. American Alliance. A notice was also inserted in the local press. The meeting was very well attended, and the attendance was representative of the various political opinions in the town.

My recollection is that Maurice Moyhahan presided at the meeting and there were several other speakers - all local. No representative from Dublin or elsewhere attended this meeting. A small Committee, probably six or seven, was formed from names submitted by members of the audience and agreed to by the meeting. I was appointed Secretary, and Father Charlie Brennan and I were appointed Treasurers and Trustees. I do not remember who was appointed Chairman of the Committee, and the only members whose names I can remember are Austin Stack and J.P. O'Donnell.

Father Charlie Brennan was Chairman of the Irish Club. It had been started by a few of us as a Social Club. Miceal O'FLYNN the Gaelic League Organiser, was a member, and, although no regular Irish classes were held, Irish was used regularly and its use encouraged amongst the members. It was at the Irish Club all the discussions for the formation of the Irish Volunteers in Tralee took place, and it was there all the preliminary meetings were held. Father Charlie Brennan took an active interest in the project from the start.

Four Companies for the town were formed immediately after the inaugural public meeting. They were: 'A' Company, Boherbue; 'B' Company, Strand Street; 'C' Company, centre of town, and 'D' Company, Rock Street. No Officers were appointed at first, but an organiser was appointed for each day. Eamon O'Connor and I organised 'C' Company. The other organisers were Matt

McMahon, 'A' Company; Dan Healy, 'B' Company; Austin Stack, 'D' Company. As soon as the Company areas were organised, each Company elected its own Officers. Officers were well established in their commands when the first public parade and review was held in the market on 14th June, 1914.

In early January, 1914, the total strength of the four Companies was about 200. 'A' Company was able to get the use of the Picturedrome occasionally for training, but, in the main, all we could do was to parade on Sundays at the sports field. Before the end of January, however, we had acquired the Rink; this became headquarters for all activities, gave us facilities for training of all Companies and for a regular programme of work. We settled down there to drills two or three nights a week, lectures, instructions and meetings.

From the beginning we looked upon the whole of the County as being within our sphere to develop and organise. Organisers and speakers were sent out to Sunday meetings in a number of places. I was at Dingle, Rathmore, Ardfert and Abbeydorney on this work. There was no County Committee at that stage, and no Military Council.

We built up quite a good fund by collecting subscriptions in the town. The men paid 2d or 3d a week into Company funds which defrayed most of the local expenses so that the larger fund could be used for the purchase of arms. There was a separate arms fund for the men. Amounts paid into it were credited to them individually, and the intention was to give the available arms to those who had made a substantial contribution towards the cost. Our first payment for arms was made by me to the O'Rahilly at Wexford Feis at Whit, 1914. I gave him £200. Soon afterwards we got 20 or 25 single shot Martinis. I do not think we got ammunition at the time, but we got it later. Before getting the Martinis we had been training with dummy rifles. We had purchased a few .22 rifles for target practice and had set up a .22 range on the Rink. We had no revolvers at that stage.

From the Spring of 1914 regular Sunday parades and marches were held. These were utilised to encourage and develop the formation of Companies in localities which could be reached in a day's march from Tralee. By June, 1914, a number of Companies had developed all over the County, and most of them were present at the review by Captain Talbot Crosbie that month. I remember that there was some trouble in Ballymacelligott Company and I had to go out there in connection with this parade. There were two A.O.H. Sections in the Company - American Alliance and Board of Erin, and they were not pulling together too well.

Equipment at June, 1914, consisted of haversacks, belts and bandoliers. Practically all men were supplied with these. We had purchased them from Lawlors, Dublin. Men were to parade ~~and~~ themselves with caps and uniforms but there were very few of these in Tralee at that time. Cyclist and Signal Sections had been formed of men drawn from the four Companies. Strength was between 500 and 600. There was a Fianna organisation in Listowel in which Ned Healy was active, but none, I think, in Tralee then.

I left Tralee in July, 1914, and did not return until January, 1917. Up to the time I left the original Committee was still functioning, there was no County Committee or Military Council. No serious political trouble of any kind had developed in the organisation up to that time.

SIGNED: Desmond Grean

DATE: 30/4/1948

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WITNESS: Florence Donohue.