

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21

NO. W.S. 149

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 149

Witness

Charles Weston

Identity

Lieut. Lusk Coy. 5th Bn. (Fingal) Dublin Bde. 1916.

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STATEMENT BY CHARLES WESTON, BURROW ROAD,
PORTRANE, CO. DUBLIN.

I was always a keen student of Irish history from my earliest years and I liked particularly to study the many attempts that had been made to break the English hold on our country. I was a member of the Gaelic League and the ^{Lusk. Co.} Rush Pipers' Band and as such was closely associated with Tom Ashe.

On the formation of the Irish Volunteers I seen that there was a chance here of doing something to burst the English domination. I joined the Volunteers in Lusk about the end of 1913. There was a split in the Volunteers here at this time and there were Irish Volunteers and Hibernian Volunteers. This occurred over a local election between J. Rooney and Mark Taylor of Lusk. I cannot remember who was present when I joined, but Ned and John Rooney were the principal men at the time.

We were not required to take any oath or sign any documents but were issued with a membership card. We paid a small subscription of about 3d per week towards the purchase of uniforms, rifles and equipment. The strength of the Coy. was about 90. There were a lot of personal jealousies ^{between the two} amongst the ~~members~~ ^{Companies} ~~members~~. We had parades twice per week. The instructors were ex-soldiers named Murphy and Norton. Murphy was called up on the outbreak of the War.

We had no arms and did our drills with wooden guns. We had some shotguns but they were not carried on these parades. We had target practice with an air rifle, firing darts in the Band Room, and with a .22 rifle in a field close by. I was not at the Howth Gun Running, but members of both Coys. were there, but neither got any rifles.

The next incident I remember was the "Split". About 50% of our members became inactive, but did not go over to the Redmondites. After this we formed a small section of the I.Vols. in Turvey with

Tom Ashe in charge. We were called the Turvey Half-Coy. but had no direct affiliation with any other Coy. We had meetings in an old house belonging to Mr. McAllister. Our section was about 12 men and we were trained as a Signal Section. We did semaphore and Morse signalling with flags. Tom Ashe was instructor and he was very efficient in signalling.

We were now part of the 5th Bn. (Fingal) Dublin Brigade. Dr. Hayes was the Bn. Comdt. Tom Ashe was Capt. of Turvey Section. Ned Rooney was Captain of Lusk Coy. Jem Lawless was Captain of Cloghran Section. Frank Lawless was Bn. Quartermaster. Dick Coleman, Captain of Swords Coy. Peadar Kelly was a Lt. in Swords Coy. J. McGuinness was Capt. of Skerries Coy. I think Tom Reilly was Capt. of St. Margaret's Coy. and Paddy Brogan and Dan Brophy were Lieuts. in Lusk Coy.

We had plenty of .22 rifle practice. We bought our own ammunition; it was plentiful then. We also had a pistol about .38 calibre and we got practice with this also. We won a shooting competition for which we got a new .22 rifle. We had lectures each week by a Mr. S. O'Duffy who was an ex-British officer. These covered general field training, running of camps and field tactics. We had exercises with the rest of the Battn. at Broad Meadows and on one occasion staged an attack on the town of Skerries. Brigade ~~courses~~ ^{exercises} were also held between St. Margaret's and Finglas and before the Rebellion we had an exercise in conjunction with the Citizen Army. The Brigade exercise took place at Ticknock in the Dublin Mountains. We cycled to Dublin and marched to Ticknock and back for this.

Officers from Dublin visited us regularly. The O'Rahilly held a meeting in the Town Hall, Balbriggan, and most of the Battn. was there. The object was to form a company in that town. We were not received very favourably in Balbriggan and the meeting had very little success. Thomas McDonagh visited

visited us at Turvey and was present at an exercise there at a display of signalling. Some signallers from Dublin under Liam O'Carroll took part in this.

For this parade we got a loan of rifles from Christopher McAllister of Donabate who had custody of the Redmond Volunteers rifles. Four Martini Enfields and a Lee Enfield carbine. We held on to those rifles - not returning them. After a raid on the docks in the city about 40 rifles were dumped in McAllister's at Turvey. After some time these were returned to the Brigade in Dublin in Jem Lawless's pony and trap.

I went with the Swords Coy. to Limerick for a reception to Capt. Monteith. The real purpose was a rally of the Cork and Dublin Volunteers. The Swords men carried rifles; we did not carry any. There was a big parade in Limerick that day during which mud and tins were pelted at us and some of our men got hit. On going to the train a mob of thousands tried to separate our section of the parade from the main body. This was our Bn. We were ordered to club rifles - that is put the rifles on our shoulders with the butt up. They grabbed Christy Taylor's rifle. I was next to him and we recovered it immediately. We were pelted and booed most of the way to the station.

We made it a point to attend all parades as we were always expecting arms to be landed and we wanted to be there. I joined the I.R.B. about Sept. 1915 and, being in close touch with Tom Ashe, I understood there would be a rising and a fight. O'Duffy continued to visit us and give lectures. About a week before the rebellion Ned Daly paid us a visit. He made a speech to us and told us he expected to see us again very shortly under very different circumstances.

I bought a rifle from Frank Lawless and paid 50/- for it. My brother also bought one. My brother and I also bought .32 Harrington & Richardson revolvers from Tom Ashe. I had a haversack and I purchased leather pouches at Lawlors of Fownes St.

Dublin. I had about 7 rds. of .32 and we had about 50 rds. in all for the rifles in the Coy.

We had a few practices at Turvey with Service rifles at 100^x and 200^x range. There were not further incidents until Holy Week. On Thursday night I met Ashe and he told me that Sunday would be our last mobilisation. The Germans he said were outside. From this I understood they were ready to land. I was appointed O/C. of the Section after Tom Ashe was appointed Bn. O/C. Ashe was now O/C. and Dr. Hayes was Adjutant. Frank Lawless was still Q/master. Ashe told me to go to Swords on Good Friday night to Lawless's shop and that there would be arms and ammunition coming from Dublin. He said that Frank Lawless might want some help and he did not want the Volunteers to generally know about this. I went there on Friday night. Rifles, ammunition and medical supplies had arrived from Dublin. Frank Lawless was there, also Dr. Hayes with his car. The stuff was put into Lawless's van (horse) and brought to Saucerstown, the Lawless home. Jack Crenigan was driving the van. I met Ashe on Saturday and he told me the Rising was starting on Sunday and that everything was ready. He told me my first job after final order came would be to blow the Rogerstown Viaduct Bridge carrying the G.N. Railway. I asked if I could lay the charges at the granite buttresses on that Saturday night at low tide. He said 'No' we must be very careful not to make any visible moves whatsoever, that everything was to start as a surprise. This surprise was vital, as, if the military discovered anything, it would be detrimental to the whole plan of the Volunteers.

We were ordered to mobilise at Rathbeale Cross on Easter Sunday and to carry all arms and ammunition and bring 24 hours rations and have bicycles. We mobilised at 12 p.m. About 120 men mobilised. Skerries was the biggest contingent. We were there all that evening. We went to Frank Lawless's place for food. We had got copies of the Sunday Independent and seen on it MacNeill's countermanding order. There was great disappointment

amongst the men but they took it quietly as just another of the many disappointments they had become used to. After food at Lawless's we had a dance in the barn. At about 10 p.m. we were dismissed and instructed to be ready to be called out at any time. Every man was to remain ready. I got no further details except Ashe told me to be ready to come out at any time. I went home and put away my stuff and went to a dance in Lusk.

I was at home after the dance about two hours when I was mobilised again by Joseph Lawless (now Col. Lawless). This was about 7.30 a.m. on Monday morning. We were to mobilise at Knocksedan at 10 a.m. I mobilised my section and proceeded to Knocksedan. Tom Ashe and Frank Lawless were there. Mobilisation was completed at 12 a.m. There were very few there, only Swords men. There were only about 63 all present now. Ashe called me aside and gave me instructions about the Bridge again. We tied the gelignite, fuses, and detonators, on Ashe's motor cycle. The quarry men from Lusk who were to come with me on this job had not mobilised. Ashe told me I would meet them on my way and to bring them with me. Joe Lawless rode the motor cycle and I was on a push bicycle.

On leaving Knocksedan Dr. Hayes gave me two strips of red bunting. These were to be tied a distance away from the ends of the bridge to warn oncoming trains. We met the Lusk Coy. at Roganstown with Ned Rooney in charge. I took the ^{quarry} ~~quarry~~ men with me and told Ned Rooney I was going to blow the bridge, and that the fight was on. There was a great buzz of excitement amongst the Lusk men on hearing the news. When we got to Rogerstown the tide was flowing very strong through the arches and it was impossible to get the charges placed at the buttresses. Joe Lawless was cutting the telephone wires at this time. A man of mine who was posted down the line halted the Stationmaster who became abusive and he had to be threatened to keep him from going on the bridge. We put the charges between the girders of the bridge. We set the fuzes off and the resultant explosion

blew the rails out of position and made the line unserviceable. This was only of a temporary nature and it was easily repaired by railway engineers during the week.

We returned to Knocksedan. The motor cycle broke down and I took Joe Lawless on the back of my bike to the main road where we climbed the poles and cut the telephone wires. The local people who knew me well were shouting "Charlie Weston, are you gone mad?". We travelled on to Finglas where the Battn. had moved in the meantime and found them on the golf links or Finglas Glen. They were digging trenches overlooking the main road. I understood we were moving into the city. Ashe told me he was awaiting orders. Rations were good, provisions being purchased locally and we got a good meal of eggs, bread and tea. That night a section went to Blanchardstown, I understand it was to destroy the railway there. Guards were mounted and sentries posted. The remainder of the Battn. slept in the open. We did not enter any houses. There were no barricades on the roads and no holding up of traffic. We could hear the firing in the city quite plainly.

On Tuesday morning a sheep was killed by Joe Taylor who acted as butcher. We had rashers, eggs, tea and bread for breakfast. The Q/master had a horse van in which he carried rations and cooking utensils. It was driven by a Vol. Norton. Ashe sent Miss Adrien who was acting as runner into the city with a report of the position, numbers, armament, etc. I think he was contemplating on the Skerries men joining us and he overestimated his strength. Miss Adrien returned about 11 a.m. with instructions to send 40 men into the city to the G.P.O. Twenty men were detailed ^{by Ashe} ~~(by Dick Coleman and Ashe)~~ and under Dick Coleman proceeded to the city. Joe Taylor went with them to get instructions. They went on foot leaving their bicycles behind them. Dinner was served to us there. Towards evening we could hear artillery in the city and machine gun fire was very heavy also.

Dick Mulcahy joined us at Finglas that day, also some men from the city who could not contact their own units. Some of these went back into the city. Some remained with us. There were two men with Mulcahy. This was the first time I had met Mulcahy, he was introduced to me by Ashe. He struck me as being a very capable and efficient officer. That evening Ashe informed me that we were moving back to Knocksedan again and that my Section would be the Advance Guard. On the way to Knocksedan Jem Lawless sent me a message to halt - that there was cavalry coming - he could hear them. We halted. Ashe came up in Dr. Hayes's car and he said "Let them come, we will be able to handle them. I have confidence in the men I have in the Advance Guard". We then proceeded to Knocksedan without further incident and billeted in an old farmhouse at Kileek, lying in the sheds on straw. We had the usual meal here of tea, bread and some had eggs. The food at this stage was getting poor, bread was getting very scarce. Some more men joined us here.

On Wednesday morning we were organised into 4 sections. I was given command of No. 1 Section; Edward Rooney No. 2; J.V. Lawless No. 3, and Joseph Lawless No. 4. At about 8.30 a.m. we moved on Swords with the object of capturing Swords Police Bks. and Donabate Police Barracks and destroying communications generally. I was to move on Swords via Rathbeale Cross Roads and the green, enter Swords and rush the Post Office, and smash all the instruments there, and take up a position in the row of houses opposite the barracks. By the time we had finished with the Post Office the Sergt. of the Police was talking to Ashe at the Barrack door. He had agreed to surrender. We entered the Barracks and took possession of five carbine .303 rifles and as far as I can remember about 25 rds. of .303. We also got one Webley Revolver and 12 rds. for same. One of the Barrack Windows had steel ^{shutters} ~~shutters~~ with loopholes for firing through. This window controlled the main street. I took a sledge and broke the shutters off.

Just after the Barracks surrendered a motor van full of bread belonging to Kennedy's Bakery from the city came down the street. We took possession of the van. The driver came with us and drove the van. Later that man was let go and paid 10/- for his day. We also destroyed the public telephone in Taylor's shop.

We then proceeded to Donabate with my Section as Advance Guard. We went via Batter Lane on to the main road at Turvey and on to Donabate. At Turvey a civilian on a motor cycle passed - refusing to halt. We did not fire as we did not like to shoot civilians. On reaching the railway bridge at Donabate we deployed round the railway line in order to cut the line. The police barracks was about 200 yards away. A few shots were fired here at a man on the railway who refused to halt. Mulcahy was very annoyed at this as it gave a warning to the Barracks. My section was ordered to go on and take up positions covering the Barracks. Ashe and Mulcahy came with us and entered the Post Office and dismantled the telephone and telegraph instruments there. The Postmaster (Mr. Dunne) was an ex-R.I.C. man (he joined the Black and Tans in 1920) came out of the P. Office with Ashe. He volunteered to go into the barracks and ask the Sergt. to surrender. After a couple of minutes he came out of the Bks. and said there was two men working in the barracks and we would have to let them out. He also said the Sergt. refused to surrender the Barracks. The two men were allowed out.

The barracks was 50 yards from the road and approached by a gravel path. We were ordered to take a pickaxe, sledge, and crowbar and burst in the door. Six of us rushed up to the door and shouted at the police to surrender or we would break in the door. The answer was a revolver shot fired out of the top window. Immediately the window was riddled by bullets from our men. We proceeded to break in the door. After a few seconds the door frame gave way ^{and} the door went in. There was an inner iron door with a chain on it. When the door went in they immediately

shouted that they would surrender. They could not get the iron door open, but one of them threw a rifle through the top window as a token of surrender. They eventually got the inner door opened and handed out 3 rifles (carbines) and a revolver and a small amount of ammunition. I got the revolver and 12 rds. of ammunition for same. We went into the Barracks and Ashe took the Day Book and looked up the entries and pointed out entries about the Turvey Section of the Volunteers parades, etc. and the names of the Volunteers on parade on different dates. We had a chat with the police who had now got over their nervousness. After this the Battn. returned to billets at Kileek. Food was purchased at Donabate for which Ashe paid.

Thursday morning at 2 a.m. we proceeded to Garristown with the object of taking Garristown Post Office and Barracks. My section was again advance guard but now I had two St. Margaret's men in front as scouts because they knew that part of the country. We surrounded the Police Bks. there and called on the police to surrender, but discovered that all the police had withdrawn to Balbriggan leaving only one man unarmed to look after the Barracks. We searched the Bks. and found nothing. We then went to the Post Office and destroyed the telegraph and telephon instruments and took what money was there - a few pounds - for which Dick Mulcahy gave a receipt remarking to the Postmaster at the time "This money is of no longer any value". No money was taken from the Post Office at Swords or Donabate, but by now it had been decided that as it was British Government money it came under the spoils of war. The Bn. then proceeded to billets at Baldwinstown near Garristown. These were again old stables, but we had a good sleep there.

On Thursday morning some of the men were grousing that the volunteers in the country had not risen. Ashe paraded the Battn in a field and spoke to us. He told us the facts as far as he knew them. He said the rest of the country outside Dublin had not risen as far as he knew, but that they would rise. He said

he was not going to keep any man against his will and that anyone who wished to go home was perfectly free to do so. He reminded us that we had sent 20 men to Dublin city where he was sure they were in the thick of the fight. He called up No.1 Section first and said "Are you willing to go on. Any man that is not let him step out". Every man of the section shouted "fight on". The same happened with the rest of the Sections. A couple of men from St. Margarets and Duke and O'Reilly however decided to go. I think Ashe was glad to be rid of them as they were potential trouble makers from the start. A Father Kevlehan came into the Camp and Ashe asked us all to kneel down and that the priest who was the son of a Fenian would give us his blessing. We did and he blessed us. About 2 p.m. the Bn. moved to Borranstown via Garristown. In passing through Garristown a bicycle which had been taken from the policeman in the barracks the previous night was returned to him as it was his own property and not a government issue. On reaching Borranstown we billeted in an old farmhouse there. Food was good this day and we had plenty of eggs and butter.

Friday morning I was told by Ashe that we were going to cut the railway line at the Black Bull and at Batterstown and to take the police barracks at Ashbourne en route. We left camp in the same order with my section leading. Some men under Q.M. Frank Lawless were left in camp to look after it and collect food. As we approached the Ashbourne-Slane Road a scout came back and told me there were two police coming towards us. We came on them suddenly and called on them to surrender. One of them put up his hands, the other tried to take the rifle off his shoulder where he had it slung. He was immediately grappled by John McAllister who was a noted wrestler. In a second he had the policeman down and he gave in. Having disarmed the police we proceeded and halted at the Cross of the Rath. There was a barricade across the road near the barracks.

It was only a plank laid on some boxes apparently to stop cars. Ashe now had a conversation with the police prisoners. The police agreed to go into the Bks. and ask their comrades to surrender. He put white handkerchiefs around their caps to indicate they were under a flag of truce. They went into the Bks. but did not return. After a short lapse of time we were ordered to take up positions in front of the Barracks.

My section was ordered up along the road under cover of a low bank to get in front of the Bks. Another party were ordered to take position in rear of the Bks. We were to attack immediately. We got in front of the Bks. and opened fire. There was fire from the Bks. during our approach. Our fire was heavy and the windows were quickly shattered. Behind us was a couple of men with canister grenades. One of these grenades was thrown at the Bks. and exploded with a terrific bang, but it did not go near the Bks. Immediately the garrison shouted that they would surrender and firing ceased. We all stood up and shouted at them to open the door. As they were trying to open the door I heard Ashe shout "stop them cars". The garrison did not open the door and on looking up the road towards Slane I saw a number of cars coming down the hill from that direction. The first cars pulled up short of the Cross Roads and I saw police jump from them with helmets and rifles. We jumped across the ditch into the field in front of the Bks. and ⁱⁿ a few seconds Mulcahy came to me and ordered me to go up to the cross and see how many police were in it, and where they were.

I got to the Cross and had a quick look up the road. I estimated there was a hundred police there and I returned to Mulcahy and reported this to him. He said "It does not matter if there is a thousand, we will deal with those fellows". "Get your men along the road to the Cross and hold the police from the Cross. Keep them under fire and don't waste ammunition. I know you are good fellows. I will get round them with the rest of the main body. You hold on to ^{the} Cross Roads". He jumped out

on the road. He looked up the road as if surveying the position and then crossed the road and into the field on the other side.

There was good banks along the road and some water cuttings and by using these we were able to get up to the Cross Roads. We had a good view from this down along the road where the police were taking cover and also into the fields on the west side of the road. We were able to put heavy fire on the police positions. They were taking cover on the sides of the road and under the cars, but we were careful not to waste ammunition and only to fire when targets presented themselves. After about an hour and a half I received an order to retreat from Ashe. This was taken to me by a runner. My men crossed the road at the double one at a time to the east side. We retreated along a ditch towards the main body. When about 150 yards from the Cross Roads word came that we were to go back to our original positions. We had to go back the same way using the same tactics and succeeded without any casualties. There was no change in the police positions, After we got back to our position we discovered the police under the cars by the dust that would rise when they fired. This was caused by the blast or vacuum set up by the police rifles when fired. We put down heavy fire on the police where we thought they were and also under the cars. Some of the police rolled out from under the cars and I would say there was a number of them hit at this stage.

After about an hour we realised our men were pressing them from the other or Slane end as they began to run down the road towards us and came nearer to our fire positions and we could hear the report of shotguns which we knew were our men and could hear men shouting. I could hear Mulcahy's voice in the intermittent fire. He was shouting "Will you surrender. By if you don't we will give you a dog's death".

The police were becoming demoralised now and presenting ideal targets now and again. They were driven down towards us and the cars, and being herded close together. The next thing I saw was the police put their hands up. Some were running and taking cover after having discarded their rifles. Eventually they all surrendered. Our parties joined up then.

The wounded police were attended to by Dr. Hayes, Miss Adrien and the Murray girls from Garristown who had now come on the scene. Mulcahy told me to go back to camp and empty the breadvan and have the driver take it down to the scene of the fight. The camp section at this time was below the cross roads on the way to Borranstown. I should add here that there was no fire from the barracks during the fight with the main police force. Some of my men were covering it off to prevent the police from leaving. Their orders were to shoot any police trying to get out of the barracks.

On arrival in camp the only volunteer there was Joe Taylor, who was wounded in the knee. We unloaded the van and brought it to the Cross of the Rath and all the police rifles and ammunition were put into it. The survivors of the police were put into what cars were still in running order and sent back to their stations. After this the Battn. returned to camp. I estimated there were about 60 police including the garrison in the barracks. We had two men killed and three wounded. A few others had slight wounds which did not put them out of action.

The police had a large number killed and wounded, but I could not say how many. Everyone was now in great spirits as a result of our victory and we felt ready now for anything that might come. We had gained great confidence in ourselves and felt that given an equal or nearly equal chance we were a match for any force that we would meet. Food, however, was poor now, and there was insufficient meat.

Saturday the Battn. moved to a new camp at New Barn near Kilsallaghan and again we billeted in old sheds and lay on straw. Strong guards were mounted on the camp. There was no incident of note on Saturday. We were aware that there was heavy fighting in Dublin as Miss Adrien was in and out of the city up to Thursday.

Sunday about 11 a.m. Head Constable Keely of Balbriggan and Sgt. Reilly of Swords of the R.I.C. were held up by our guards and brought into camp. Ashe sent Mulcahy into the city with the Head Constable to see Pearse. Ashe told me they had surrendered in the city and the police wanted us to surrender also, but that he had sent Mulcahy into the city to get information. The news got amongst the men that all was over and there was great disappointment and dejection. A number of us were prepared to go on the run. When Mulcahy came back Ashe said to me "We fought as soldiers. We came out under Pearse as soldiers and it is our duty to surrender on his orders." I thought I was slighting him and I did not go. Five of my section and some others went away and went on the run, the remainder of us waited there having discarded our arms and equipment.

The Lancers arrived and we were marched under their escort to Swords. They were nice type of fellows and never passed any offensive remarks to us. In Swords we were put into lorries and brought to Richmond Bks. Dublin. Neither in Swords or in the city was there any incident. While entering Richmond Bks. Joe Lawless's finger got caught between the gate pier and the lorry and was taken off. We were put in a large barrack room - no food and no beds - and had to lie on the floor. We were together in one room which was very overcrowded. That night Tom Ashe sang an old rebel song for us "The Cottage by the Lee" Dr. Hayes and others also sang. We were searched coming in. Some watches and money were taken of the lads.

On Monday morning we got bully beef and biscuits and tea and afterwards we were taken to the gymnasium for interrogation. The interrogation was carried out by officers, detectives and R.I.C. The R.I.C. were men who were stationed locally. Ashe, Frank and Jem Lawless were taken away from us. Some of the leaders of the revolt were there. I saw Con Colbert, Ned Daly, McDermott and McBride. I saw McDonagh going past the window. We were taken back to the barrack room and an officer came and asked us if any money or watches were taken from us and if we could identify the men who took them.

On Tuesday we were marched to the North Wall and put on a cattle boat down in the hold. On the barrack square before we left we were the subject of a very hostile demonstration by a crowd of civilians, but no one passed any remarks on us en route through the city. We sailed that night and arrived in Holyhead and from there to Knutsford by train. The boys were in good cheer and sung all the way. I spoke to Mulcahy on board the ship and he said "I am as happy as the day is long - everything is working out grand". On arrival in Knutsford we were put in single cells with bed board and a stool, but no bed. Next evening I got a pillow. After three days I got a very worn blanket. I was about a fortnight there before I got a mattress.

We got only half an hour or twenty minutes exercise each day and were not allowed to talk. Food was very bad and the ration was about quarter enough. After a week we had a bath and a severe haircut. I was never abused however. When about three weeks there we got to Mass and in the chapel we were able to talk a little to one another. Night after night I dreamt of food I was so hungry. I was now issued with a mattress and another blanket which was appreciated. About this time we were allowed to talk and this was the first time since arriving that we could compare notes and experience with other prisoners. My aunt was allowed to visit me now and she was able to get me in some food into the prison. From that on things were not so bad and were improving.

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Irish ~~and~~ from Manchester brought us a lot of food and parcels began to come from home.

After six weeks in Knutsford we were moved to Frongoch in Wales. Frongoch was good. We were all together here in a big loft in an old distillery. We had straw matthresses and fairly good bedding. Food was better and camp routine was good. We had our own Camp Comdt. there and were organised in Coys. We had plenty of hot water for baths and washing. We had football games, concerts etc., but card playing was the principal pastime. Language classes and other subjects were taught there.

After a month or so there^{we} were brought in gangs to Wandsworth and from there to London by bus and before the Sankey Commission. After this we were taken back to Frongoch again. Some of the men were getting released now including some of the men who went into the city from Finglas on Easter Tuesday. At Christmas we were released and returned to Dublin and home.

There was a vast difference in the outlook of the people on our return and we got a grand reception on our arrival in the city and on our return home.

I remember asking Dick Mulcahy while we were interned what he meant when he said on the boat "I am as happy as the day is long, everything is working out grand" and his explanation was this - "By sending us to prison they have made heroes out of us. We will have men with us in the future who would never have touched us if they had sent us home after we surrendered". These are not his words but convey his explanation of the matter to me.

I was always of the opinion that Dick Mulcahy had been sent by headquarters in a judicious manner to join us on that Easter Tuesday, (if not to take charge,) to help out Ashe. I remember on one occasion telling him about my feelings on

this matter. He said "Not at all, get that idea out of your head. I joined you because I could not link up with my own unit".

Signed: Charles Weston

Date 7th October 1948

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