

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURÓ STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 166

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 166

Witness

Seamus Doyle

Identity

Took part in Rising 1916 with B/Coy.
3rd Battn. I.V.

Subject

Mount St. Bridge area 1916.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil

File No. S.711

Form B.S.M. 2.

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Statement by

Seumas Doyle, 23 St. Aidan's Park, Marino.

I was present at the meeting in the Rotunda on 25 November, 1913, at which the Irish Volunteers were formed. I signed an enrolment form at the meeting and was subsequently notified to attend at the Columcille Hall, Blackhall Place. I was attached to "F" Company, 1st Battalion, Dublin Brigade. After a short time we transferred to 40 Parnell Square and later to 25 Parnell Square, which was our Company Headquarters until Easter Week, 1916.

Shortly after the formation of the Company an election of officers was held. The following were elected :-

Captain	-	Fionán Lynch
1st Lieutenant	-	Jack Shouldice
2nd Lieutenant	-	Diarmuid O'Hegarty

Before the split the Company was about 200 strong. When the split occurred only about 20 remained true to the Irish Volunteers. Our Company Officers also remained true. The first parade I remember after the split was at the funeral of Mr. Pidgeon of the Coombe who died as a result of wounds received in Bachelors Walk. Only about 20/25 members paraded at the funeral.

About the spring of 1914 Jack Shouldice asked me to join the I.R.B. I was sworn in by him and was a member of the Bart Teeling Circle which usually held monthly meetings at The Printers' Hall, Lower Gardiner Street. The Centre, as far as I remember, was Bulmer Hobson, although I remember Cathal Brugha presiding at some meetings. The principal

matter discussed at the meetings was the suitability of persons proposed for membership of the I.R.B.

About February 1915 I met J. J. Bourke who used to contribute articles to "Nationality" and "The Workers' Republic". He told me that things would soon be humming and mentioned that a rising was intended. He did not say that Connolly told him, but I understood that he had his information from James Connolly with whom he was on intimate terms.

During 1915 I transferred my residence from Belvedere Road to Haddington Road which was in the 3rd Battalion area. I was present at a parade on Holy Thursday night at 25 Parnell Square. The parade was addressed by a man whom I did not know. He gave us minute instructions as to what we were to bring for the parade on Easter Sunday. We were to mobilise at Columcille Hall, Blackhall Place, at 3 p.m., bring 24 hours' rations, uniform, equipment and all available ammunition. He also told us that if we had not a uniform not to wear a suit which would attract fire. Shortly after this man left Commandant Eamon Daly, Battalion O/C, came and gave us the very same instructions. We understood from these instructions that we were going into action although the question of a rising was not mentioned by either Commandant Daly or the other man.

During Holy Week, I think on Good Friday, I met Captain Fionán Lynch in Grafton Street. He said to me : "You're alright for Sunday". I said : "Yes; if I can't get to my own unit I'll fall in with the 3rd Battalion", and he agreed. He instructed me to remain convenient to my home and to guard my arms and equipment very carefully.

On Easter Saturday I met Liam Archer, now Assistant Chief of Staff. He was a section commander of the Company. He said to me : "Aren't you a member of 'F' Company?". I replied that I was. He said : "Go home and remain at home. If trouble breaks out, fight or get your way to Headquarters".

Later on Saturday I met Liam Tannam and he told me that his Company, "E" Company, 3rd Battalion, were parading at Cullenswood House, Oakley Road, at 3 o'clock on Easter Sunday.

On Easter Sunday morning I read McNeill's order in the "Sunday Independent" cancelling all parades for the week-end. In view of this I decided to go to Oakley Road to find out what was happening. I arrived there shortly before 3 p.m. There were about 60 men on parade. At about 3.30 Tannam dismissed the Company and told us to be ready for probable immediate mobilisation during the following days.

Next day, Easter Monday, at 11 o'clock I went to Oakley Road although I had not been mobilised. There were between 20-25 men on parade under section commander Pat Doyle (Milltown). I was wearing green puttees and a bandolier. I had a Martini-Henry rifle and 150 rounds of ammunition. Every man was armed with some kind of weapon. Some had shot-guns, others had rifles, and a few carried pikes. Shortly after 11.30 Doyle told us he had instructions from Captain Tannam to bring the Company to the G.P.O. We then marched off in single file on each side of the road. We proceeded along Ranelagh Road and Dartmouth Square, then along the canal. When we arrived at Grand Canal Street Bridge a man whom I did not know, came over to Doyle who was in charge of the parade, and told him we were to march to Bolands Bakery. On our march from Oakley Road we heard some shooting which we afterwards were told was from Davey's public-house, Portobello, which had been taken over by the Irish Volunteers.

We arrived at Bolands at about 12.30. - it was already occupied by the Volunteers. When we entered the Bakery we were put to several jobs by Lieutenant Simon Donnelly and Commandant De Valera. Another man and I were detailed to erect a barricade of sacks of flour facing the gate leading to Grand Canal Quay.

On Monday night I and three others under section commander Pat Flanagan were on guard duty in the Dispensary, Grand Canal Street, and on Tuesday morning I and two others under Lieutenant George Murphy visited the Tram Power Station, Ringsend Road. Lieutenant Murphy ordered the Engineer in charge to close down the Power Station and to cut off the supply of electricity. This was quickly done. The rest of that day, Tuesday, I spent on guard duty in the Distillery, Ringsend Road. We were withdrawn that night by section commander Cullen about 11 o'clock and we had a good sleep in the Bakery.

Next morning, Wednesday, Lieutenant Simon Donnelly ordered myself, Volunteers Bob Cooper and Seumas Kavanagh with section commander Donohue to occupy the premises of Messrs. Roberts, Builders' Yard, Clanwilliam Place. Donohue, Kavanagh and I took up positions on the roof of a shed overlooking Clanwilliam Place and nearer to Mount Street Bridge. We did not loophole the wall but fired over it. Cooper was allotted the position adjacent to Grand Canal Street Bridge.

The first enemy we saw that morning was a soldier crossing over Grand Canal Street Bridge where there was a barricade consisting of overturned bread vans and other obstacles. Cooper and I fired at the soldier who was evidently a scout. He gave a small jump and disappeared from my view. I was informed months later by Captain Liam Tannam that the body of a British soldier was found near the barricade.

We heard heavy firing further up towards Merrion Road, Ballsbridge. The first enemy attack came across Mount Street Bridge at about 11.30. They were fired on by the men in Clanwilliam House and any that survived to cross the bridge we fired at them. The enemy came in a rather wild manner and appeared not to know what to do. Another rush across the bridge was repeated later by another group of enemy troops and met a strong fire from Clanwilliam House. Some of them sought cover

at the canal wall, Warrington Place, and we fired at them. They chose the wrong side of the wall for cover and were an easy target from our position on Robert's yard. We then noticed about 8/10 British troops at the turf clamps on the other side of the canal. We fired at them and ducked down to re-load and when we came up to re-engage them we found them retreating round the cottages and I noticed that they were helping one man along. We inflicted a number of casualties as they were the easiest target we had that day.

There was a lull in the firing. An enemy Sergeant was coming down towards our position from Clanwilliam House direction. He did not carry a rifle and had side arms. I drew the attention of Seumas Kavanagh to him. Kavanagh had a Howth rifle and fired at him. The N.C.O. went down in a heap and died a few minutes later.

More firing from Clanwilliam House was in progress and I heard someone say, "Get off the road". I looked over the wall and saw a number of white-coated men and women with a red cross on their sleeves. Firing ceased and I watched the enemy casualties being carried away on stretchers.

Later that evening, I think about 5.30, we got orders from Lieutenant Simon Donnelly to evacuate our position. We retired through the grounds of Sir Patrick Dunn's Hospital. A heap of sand was piled up against the wall. We ran up it and jumped down to the Hospital grounds. We got back safely into Bolands Bakery. Lieutenant Simon Donnelly was waiting there for us and he said to us : "Thank God, you are all back safe". Shortly after getting back to the Bakery we saw a blaze and heard cheering. Clanwilliam House was on fire. Robert's yard was not re-occupied by our men during the remainder of the week.

For the rest of the week I was on duty on the railway. Captain Seán MacMahon and Lieutenant Seán Quinn were in charge. We were on guard almost continually, with very little sleep, until Sunday when we were told of the surrender.

On Saturday morning I met Commandant De Valera on the railway line near Bolands. I had a short chat with him. He pointed to the flag on the Distillery at Ringsend Road and said the enemy were still firing at the building although we had not a man in the Distillery since Tuesday night. A British soldier said to some of us after the surrender : "All of your fellows in the building with the flag, must have been wiped out". The flag as far as I can remember, was a green flag with a harp.

We surrendered on Low Sunday. A very Low Sunday I heard one of our men remark. I was on the railway bridge near Westland Row Station when a man named Waters came up to me and told me that it had been decided to surrender. He said : "We'll all surrender together". We went back to Bolands and fell in under Commandant De Valera and marched to Grattan Street where we laid down our arms. Lower Mount Street was packed with enemy troops. Armoured cars were flying up and down the street. We were marched under heavy guard to Ballsbridge Show Grounds.

A Bull Show had been arranged for the Show Grounds and some animals had arrived. The bulls were taken out of the stalls and we were put in their place. We were packed in tightly and remained there until Tuesday morning. During the time we were there we had two meals a day, consisting of bully beef, hard biscuits and tea.

On Tuesday morning we were marched to Richmond Barracks, where we were scrutinised by G. men. They pointed out a man named Maurice Brennan. He was taken away to another part of the Barracks. We remained in Richmond Barracks until Friday evening when we were brought to the North Wall, put on a cattle boat for Holyhead, and from thence to Wakefield Jail, Yorkshire.

After about six weeks in Wakefield we were brought to

London and appeared before the Sankey Commission and were questioned about our activities during Easter Week.

I was asked where I worked and the amount of my pay. I was also asked if I had a gun to which I replied "Yes". I was then asked if I had fired the gun and again I answered "Yes".

I was sent back to Wakefield and after a few days I was sent to Frongoch and remained there until I was released about July 1916.

SIGNED Seamus Boyle

DATE 10th December 1948

WITNESS

Seán Brennan. Comdt.

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