

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRÉ MILÉATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 198

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 198.

(1) Mr. Thomas Walsh,  
27 Derrynane Gardens,  
Sandymount,  
Dublin.

Witness

(2) Mr. James Walsh,  
22 Nutley Park,  
Donnybrook,  
Dublin.

Identity

Members of 3rd Battalion, Irish Volunteers,  
1916.

Subject

- (a) Irish Volunteer Activities prior to 1916.
- (b) Mount St. Bridge defence,  
Easter Week 1916.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil

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JOINT STATEMENT BY

THOMAS WALSH, 27 Derrynane Gardens, Sandymount, Dublin

and

JAMES WALSH, 22 Nutley Park, Donnybrook, Dublin.

Dear Pierce, Rose, Dessy and Aileen,

You have asked me so often about different episodes in my life connected with Ireland's fight for freedom, I think it would be better if I wrote down for you as much as I can remember about those times. I will tell it to you as briefly as possible, starting with the formation of the Irish National Volunteers. This should be sufficient to give you an idea of all that concerns my effort in that direction.

I must say since Dessy has joined the L.D.F. and Pierce the Maritime Inscription they have made me feel I was young again when I listen to their exploits on land and sea. However, time marches on and I have only memories which seem to make my old blood young again. And now to start my story.

On the formation of the Irish National Volunteers I wanted to become a member of some convenient company. One of my pals had already joined a company which had its headquarters in Sandymount Castle, and he gave me a very fine description of his first drill night. He told me about the marching men and the orders of Captain Condron, and I made an appointment to go to Sandymount Castle on the next parade night. This I did, and so I became a member of "B" Company, 5th Battalion.

I was not very long in this company when I received my uniform, which I had to pay for in instalments. I was the first Volunteer in this company to wear a uniform. In the meantime my brother, Jim, had joined the same company and on the following week he received his uniform on the same system as myself.

Nothing of any importance happened in Sandymount Castle until the outbreak of Great War 1 in August, 1914. Then John E. Redmond told the world that the Irish National Volunteers would defend Ireland and so release the British Army to fight in other lands. However, this caused a difference of opinion and there was a split in the ranks of the Volunteers all over the country. Addressing "B" Company on the next parade night, Mr. Laurence Kettle pointed out to us these different opinions that had sprung up. He helped to clear the air by calling for a show of hands of the fifty strong "B" Company. This show of hands was really to determine who was for or against John Redmond. However, of the fifty Volunteers present, nine, including myself and my brother Jim, were against Redmond. That happened to be our last night in Sandymount Castle.

And so it was in all other companies' strengths that John Redmond helped to separate the wheat from the chaff, the wheat becoming the Irish Volunteers and the chaff remaining on to become disbanded altogether after a short period. My next step was to join "B" Company, 3rd Battalion, parading at Camden Row, with headquarters in 144 Great Brunswick Street, now known as Pearse Street. Jim Waters being already a member of this company introduced us to Captain Sean McMahon. Sean Quinn and Jimmy Fitzgerald were First and Second Lieutenants, with Mick McCarthy as Quartermaster. When not drilling in Camden Row we attended lectures in 144 Great Brunswick Street. Each member of "B" Company was appointed a certain task, myself and Jim being put in charge of transport. My father and mother, having a green-grocery at 4 East James Street, possessed a pony and van and a donkey and cart. Hence the company's transport. The pony's name was Mack, called after its

previous owner, the donkey was known as Kaiser, after the Kaiser of Germany. On all route marches the transport accompanied the boys, carrying their equipment, etc.

The most outstanding of these route marches was one to the Pine Forest, Rathfarnham. We were to parade in the early hours of Sunday morning at 144 Great Brunswick Street, there to collect the usual items with the addition of meat, potatoes, onions, etc., to make dinner for the troops. We marched to Dartry, where we breakfasted on the River Dodder during a terrible rainstorm, after which we proceeded on to Rathfarnham, where we attended first Mass. From now on our mock battle with another Dublin Battalion was in full swing, but we reached Pine Forest without any casualty, and the cooks started unloading the transport with a view to preparing stew for dinner. The potatoes peeled, onions chopped, and fire lighted I left the cooks to it. Thinking the "Kaiser" deserved a little freedom for a while, I unyoked him and led him upstream to give him a drink. Lo and behold, what a silly duffer I had been! I was grabbed by the shoulder and asked what I meant by giving the "Kaiser" a drink out of the stream. I asked the questioner did he expect me to give it to him out of a cup or a glass. He said something in return, but it ended up by me being drumhead courtmartialled by Commandant Eamon de Valera. The charge against me was for allowing the "Kaiser" to drink from the stream that the troops were to drink from. Comdt. de Valera told me I should have known better and not to let it happen again. I told "Kaiser" the trouble he had got me into and he let the most awful "He-Haw, He-Haw" I ever heard from any donkey.

On looking back I saw de Valera and his staff looking after us. Judging by frowns on their faces I thought we would be courtmartialled again and so sentenced to be shot.

After this I led "Kaiser" up to some sweet grass on the side of the road. I took off all his harness, with the exception of the bridle and reins with which I tied him to a bush. Now, "Kaiser" was a very cute fellow and must have known what was the cause of all the talk. He stood still for a few moments, looking down at headquarters staff, and then he gave a few more most awful "he-haws" and turning around let fly his hind hoofs several times. He then stood up on them pulling off the bridle and reins, and away with him up over the brow of the hill. "My God," I muttered, "What is to be done now?" I went down to where "B" Company officers were and told them about the "Kaiser". They held council and mobilised "B" Company and told them they might consider themselves out of the scrap and go and round up Walsh's "Kaiser", as he had deserted over the hills. Scouts were sent out, and he was located a couple of fields away. The company then went into action, surrounded him, and nearly laid him by the heels (only they were in the air). However, he got away again, "he-hawing" to his heart's content. Now you can coax an Irishman, but do not try to force him, and so it was with the donkey. We retreated to the field kitchen and collected what carrots that did not go into the stew, and advanced on him again. But no, Kaiser was Irish by birth and German by title, and away with him again. We gave up the ghost then.

It was well on into the evening by this time, and, having had nothing since breakfast on the Dodder, we returned to the stew. Out came our plates, and the cooks ladled our dinner. What a glorious aroma and what appetites, but My God! what a pickle. Was it a slice of Lot's wife that was in the pot? Oh! it was shocking, and some of the boys nearly fainted. I believe some of them really did later on.

The reason of all this is that too many cooks spoil the broth, or stew as in this case. Those of "B" Company who did not like to round up "Kaiser" remained behind, and each one, with the best intentions of course, put salt into the pot. Some, of course, managed to eat it, and for a long while afterwards did not care whether "Kaiser" drank water from above or below stream!

Now we were packing up and stowing away the utensils, etc., into the cart and were prepared to drag it home. My heart was very heavy and sad at the thoughts of losing "Kaiser", and so were all of the company. We had procured ropes and fixed them to the cart and were to drag it home in relays. We were just pulling off when out of some bushes a little bit away appeared the deserter, looking very guilty. He came right up to the now cold stew, tasted it, sniffed the wind, "he-hawed" again, rolled on the grass and walked up to the shafts to be harnessed!

All being ready now we started on our homeward march, with Tom Fulham playing on his fife all our marching songs, including "Step Together", "The Felons of our Land", "Wrap the Green Flag", etc.

The next incident I like to recall is when myself and brother Jim had a bell tent erected on a Mr. Douglas's farm at Bohernabreena. We, with our pals, went out every weekend and always spent our Summer holidays in this way. Captain Sean McMahon asked me would I mind spending a real soldiers' weekend, and I at once agreed. He arranged for Lieutenant Sean Quinn, Lieutenant Jimmy Fitzgerald, Sean O'Keeffe, himself and several others to come and join us. Now, when bedtime came we all retired to our beds which consisted of straw given us by Mr. Douglas. One man kept sentry for two

hours, and was then replaced by another, and so on until morning. During the night there was very little sleep for the visitors. They were turning and twisting and scratching all the time. At last Captain McMahon could not keep it up any longer and volunteered for the next sentry. He told me whatever I lacked in the tent I was not short of fleas, outsize ones at that, and hungry ones into the bargain! I had a good laugh at this because I knew the cause of the trouble. Next morning Sean had a very good lesson on military formation. I pointed out to him the hordes of ants with their outposts on their shirts, tunics, and even partaking of our Sunday dinner! We had many a good laugh over this night for a long time afterwards. Now we thought we were alone in this lovely valley and that no one enjoyed it only ourselves, but when we were having breakfast we noticed a squad of Royal Irish Constabulary looking over the wall which was on the road overlooking our tent. We were having a very substantial meal, and we said that after all, those chaps must have been there all night seeing that no harm came to us! and the general breakfast topic was that they were really a very decent lot of fellows! so we decided to send them up some of our spare rations. However, after asking the two boys who went up to them some unanswerable questions, they declined the rations without thanks. However, the food did not go to waste, as there were other "crows" around who enjoyed it! They were there until we left, and followed us for a long way up the road (I mean the R.I.C. of course).

The next outstanding item in my memory is the lying-in-state of O'Donovan Rossa in the City Hall. I am proud to have been one of the guard of honour at the bier of this great Irish patriot. While the doors were open, thousands of people passed in single file and peeped through the glass panel in

the lid of the coffin. The following Sunday was arranged for his burial, and Dublin was thronged with Volunteers from all over Ireland, including the remains of Redmond's Volunteers. On this morning I was appointed as steward to bring a company of Volunteers from Westland Row to Harcourt Street. I should have mentioned that the Irish Volunteers had charge of the funeral arrangements. It so happened that the company I was appointed to steward was my old Sandymount Castle pals. After telling my late Captain my mission, he drew his men to attention and I fell in beside him and we marched off to our allotted place in the procession. I joined my company later and off we marched to Glasnevin. I was standing very near Patrick Pearse when he delivered his famous oration over the grave of his unbendable and unbreakable one hundred per cent. Irishman. Pearse was perfectly right when he uttered those famous words - "The fools, the fools, the fools, they have left us our patriot dead", for on next parade night several new members joined our company, including some of Redmond's Volunteers.

Now to tell you of the St. Patrick's Day, 1916, review in College Green. On that morning we and "B" Company and all boys of the 3rd Battalion paraded and marched to SS. Michael's and John's Church to attend Mass. The church was well filled. The usual guard of honour was there, and during the Elevation at the present arms the sun coming shining through the stained glass windows was very beautiful and very inspiring. After Mass we formed up and marched to College Green where, with the rest of the Dublin Brigade, we were reviewed by Patrick Pearse and Eoin MacNeill. It was a very wet day, and I think the only appearance the sun made was I related above.

On another occasion I visited the ancient concert



rooms in Great Brunswick Street to hear Pearse's lecture on the life of John Mitchel. When he came to the table he was received with ringing cheers which lasted for several minutes. When he started to speak a bronchial tickle came in my throat and I am afraid I spoiled the lecture for a good many, as I coughed and coughed for a long time. The arrangement of the seating forbade me leaving, as I would have caused a lot more annoyance both to the speaker and his listeners. However, when I finished I enjoyed to the utmost the remainder of his lecture.

Now my chief concern in writing these records for you is my part in that ever glorious Easter Week, 1916. What I tell you now, I tell also for my brother Jim, because during those times we were inseparable, and "B" Company spoke of us as the brothers Walsh. The following weeks steeled our love and concern for one another.

Before I tell you of Easter Week I will tell you of the principal events leading up to it. They began on the Tuesday night parade in 144 when we had an inspection of all equipment. We were issued with two Howth guns and had to have in our haversacks a plate, mug, knife, fork, towel, soap, etc., and also such rations as biscuits, bovril and other iron rations. On Wednesday night we were all in 144, an unusual night to be there, but there was that something in the air that had us all poised for that something; that drawing to one another, that comradeship that knits pals together in face of coming storms and danger.

Holy Thursday night came and we were all there again. We were all rather serious now, some with deep concern showing on their faces, but all anxious for news of that birth, whatever it might be. However, the monotony was

broken by our Captain ordering us to leave in two's and proceed to Colmcille Hall in Blackhall Street, where we would get parcels of shotgun cartridges which we were to take and proceed back to 144 in pairs. We all carried small arms, but fortunately nothing happened for us to use them. When all the parcels were safely dumped in a back-basement room we went to an upstairs room which was rented in 144 by St. Andrew's Working Men's Club and told yarns and played cards until well into the morning, when we began to feel very hungry. Someone suggested tea, but there was nothing to eat. However, Joe Allwell who had a dairy in Townsend Street came to the rescue and suggested a squad should go with him and he would procure the food required. Off we went and were soon returning with bread, butter, tea, sugar, cheese, etc. Those who had remained had lighted the fire and had two kettles boiling. A Mr. and Mrs. Tom Clarke were the tenants proper, and we invaded her kitchen and made ourselves very much at home. We all enjoyed a very hearty meal that night. It was coming daylight on Good Friday morning when most of us left to go home and have some sleep.

Good Friday night was just like the previous nights, there being the usual tension and comradeship, but nothing of outstanding interest.

Holy Saturday morning came and found us in bed, and I in fact had not long retired when a messenger came from my place of daily toil to know the reasons for my not being at work. He was told I had gone away for the week-end on holidays. That afternoon 144 again had its complement of "B" Company, and the Captain told me to go and yoke up the "Kaiser" section of our transport and proceed at once to the boys' school in Exchange Street beside SS. Michael's and John's Church. I came home and told my father I wanted

"Kaiser" for a job and told him where I was going. He knew I was not going for butter or such like, and so asked me to go beforehand to Polly Gleeson in the Corporation market for two dozen cabbage and a bunch of celery. This errand completed, I arrived in Exchange Street where there were several carts in front of me and certainly transport from other companies. When my turn came I loaded up three boxes labelled "window blind rollers" and the usual markings "with care", and "do not drop", and "made in U.S.A." After decorating the boxes with the cabbage and celery I set off and passing the lower end of the street I discovered the local D.M.P. constable just inside a hallway and he drinking a hot whiskey with a slice of lemon in it. Poor simple man. What a chance to become a Sergeant or even an Inspector, or more certain, a speedy exit from this world, if he had only been more attentive to his duty.

There were quite a lot of "B" Company loitering around the vicinity that evening, and were there to make sure the Kaiser's load was not interfered with. I proceeded down Parliament Street, down Cork Hill into Dame Street, and at the corner junction of George's Street and Dame Street the D.M.P. points man stopped me and asked what I meant by interfering with the established law and order. "Did I want to make laws for myself and donkey?". However, I assured him I did not see his signal to stop and he allowed me to proceed. Off we went again and unloaded the cabbage with my father's help, went to the stable, unyoked "Kaiser" and gave him an extra pat on the back and some more oats.

That evening "B" Company with Captain and staff came to the stable and opened up the boxes and we unpacked two, not window rollers but single-barrel shotguns, all in good order and condition, and these were conveyed to 144's arsenal that night by "Kaiser". There were about twelve

in each case. They were American manufacture. Everything was now ready for the big Easter Sunday manoeuvres for which we had been preparing for quite a long time.

Having finished for the evening in 144 I went to Confession in preparation for Easter Communion. Going to Mass in St. Mary's, Haddington Road, I was amazed to see on a poster outside Hayes' shop a placard bearing the words: "All Easter manoeuvres cancelled by Eoin MacNeill".

After Mass I returned home and reading the paper I found that all was off, with an explanation by our Commander in Chief. However, later on I went to 144 and found, both inside and outside, groups of very disappointed members of "B" Company. Why all the sadness and fuss about these manoeuvres being off? Surely manoeuvres were cancelled before and had caused no whisperings and disappointments. We spent the best part of the day and night in 144, and as usual had our games, etc.

Easter Monday morning came and I was up out of bed earlier than an ordinary Bank Holiday, had breakfast and went to 144. On arrival there I was told to go and get "B" Company's transport. Jim and I ran off and yoked "Kaiser" and "Mack" and were back in 144 in a very short time. My brother Leo, who was a very young boy, insisted on coming with us. All the boys seemed in a state of excitement. The manoeuvres were to come off at last. We were sent around to the rere and were loaded up with the parcel from Colmcille Hall, the shotguns, ammunition, stretchers, first-aid supplies, etc., and were told to go off to Boland's Bakery on Grand Canal Quay with them. The tension was over, that waiting and watching were now at an

end. The birth had taken place. Yes, an Irish Republic had been proclaimed outside our headquarters, the G.P.O., by Patrick Pearse. What hopes, what joy, to be living, and bearing arms as a soldier of the Irish Republic. Of course the best was expected of us, and that we would certainly give. Was this not the day that our fathers, for over seven centuries, had been striving for, waiting for the chance to break the fetters that kept us in bondage.

On arriving at Bolands we discovered that first blood had been shed. He was a man wearing the uniform of the army of occupation and lay dead about ten yards off. When unloaded we hastened back to 144 and loaded the remainder of our supplies. What remained of "B" Company marched with us, headed by another Company carrying a green flag with a gold harp. We marched towards Ringsend Bridge and turned into Clarence Street and then into Boland's side gate and unloaded our lot into the bakery.

After collecting the remainder of our supplies from 144 I told my brother Leo to go home and tell our parents not to worry about us, that we would be all right. He reluctantly did so, after saying farewell.

We then put "Kaiser" and "Mack" into two of the best stalls we could find in the bakery stables and made sure they had plenty to eat. We were not very long there when McGowan, "B" Company's engineer, called on us to help him to break down a wall dividing the bakery from the Poor Law Dispensary in Grand Canal Street. The Dispensary was to be a Red Cross Station. This job was only completed, when our first casualty was announced. He was Volunteer Radigan. He was crossing over the wall separating the bakery from the railway when his strap caught the trigger of his rifle and the shot wounded him in the leg. He had to be carried

down a long stable roof into the bakery, and I helped to carry him through the broken wall into the dispensary. Now this long stable roof would not be very safe for travelling over often, and the engineer had another hunch, so he decided to break a hole in the railway wall into a horse stall in the bakery yard. This hole also served as a line of communication between the bakery and the railway, which was now occupied from Westland Row to Lansdown Road. After knocking the hole in the wall it was necessary to have a gangway from bakery level to railway level. This meant carrying timber from a pile in the bakery to the wall. Between each point a sentry was on duty and as we passed in either direction we had to give the password, which was "Tirim" (the Irish word for dry).

The gangway being finished we were walking around with a few of the boys when a parcel of food arrived at the bakery gate for Jim and myself, sent by my mother. We were going into a shed to enjoy our good luck when we were posted at a wired store-room to guard a Cadet in khaki who had been taken prisoner from the last train to arrive in Westland Row. Some Volunteers were passing by from duty on the railway and they gave us cigarettes and sweets which we shared with our prisoner. He was very nervous and could not understand his position. However, he enjoyed the sweets and cigarettes. We were on guard over this man some time when we were told that Father McMahon from Westland Row was hearing Confessions. We were relieved from our post and found Father McMahon, who had made a Confessional in a four-wheel bread van. We said our penance in a nook in a huge stack of flour bags. Afterwards we rambled around through the bakery and chatted to the bakers who were very busy with their ovens. We were now told to

take what rest we could, so we climbed up on top of the flour stacks but could not sleep.

During the night there was a terrific flash of light. This was caused by the cutting of the overhead tram wires at Mount Street bridge. The remainder of the night passed quietly.

Next morning, Tuesday, Jim and I and about ten others were detailed by our Captain, S. McMahon, and sent with others to Westland Row station to await further orders. We were resting here on train cushions and whatever we could find comfortable. After a considerable time, Lieutenant Sean Quinn came along and informed us that we had been picked to relieve the St. Stephen's Green garrison who were in a bad way, but as the distance was so long we would not reach there as we would be all wiped out, and that the operation had been cancelled. On our way back to the bakery, Eamon de Valera and his staff were seated at a table on the railway path. While having a few words with the prisoner, Captains McMahon and Simon Donnelly came along and told us they were sending us to reinforce an outpost.

We were given extra ammunition for our Howth guns. We had now about 200 rounds each. I had a .45 revolver, and between 50 and 60 rounds for it. Jim had a .32 revolver and about 50 rounds for it. We were also given a small box containing bread, margarine, tea, sugar, etc., and were told we were going to Clanwilliam House to defend Mount Street Bridge. Both Captains told us it was a very important post and what was expected of us, and walked with us to the bakery gate leading to Clarence Street. On sentry duty at the gate were Charlie Murphy and Peadar Macken. We here got advice to go under cover and as quickly as possible to the outpost. We now bade farewell to all four and made our way without

incident to our new position.

On arrival at Clanwilliam House at about 3 p.m. we knocked at the front door and were admitted by George Reynolds who was in charge of this position. The following were also there when we arrived: Paddie Doyle, Dick Murphy, Jimmie Doyle and Willie Ronan. We, with the rest of the garrison, now barricaded the hall door from inside with heavy furniture from an adjoining room. We were now brought upstairs to a room overlooking a considerable amount of Mount Street. We placed a couch and some chairs and cushions in one of the windows of this room. We lifted up the bottom sash of this window and made ourselves as comfortable as possible, with our guns pointing towards Mount Street.

We now remembered "B" Company lectures on street fighting and the first thing to do (we were told) on entering a house was to break all window glass and to sandbag the windows with whatever we could get in the way of coal, etc. We told Reynolds this and asked him if we could go ahead and strengthen our position. But he said no, we could not do that as he had promised to hand back the house the way he had got it. This promise was given by him when he took over the house on Monday. It was now Tuesday evening and no glass windows were destroyed or windows barricaded, except by furniture. Leaving Jim at the window I went upstairs to a bedroom and took a blanket from a bed and went to the basement in search of a coal cellar. I had an electric torch. When about to leave one of the rooms I saw what I thought was a man hiding, and I called "Hands up" twice. On the third challenge I still got no reply and switched on the torch. You can imagine my surprise at finding it to be a dressmaker's model! I found the coal



and put what I could carry into the blanket and carried it up to our window. I put it across the sill and covered it with rugs, etc.

We found it very hard to keep our eyes open for want of sleep, so we agreed to go to sleep in turn for one hour each. The stillness of Mount Street was weird. Not a soul passed, but in the distance there was considerable rifle firing.

Dawn came and was followed by a lovely sunny morning. About 7 a.m. Jim and I were told by Reynolds to go to bed for two hours sleep. We went, and did we enjoy it! After dressing we had breakfast of tea, bread and margarine. We went back to our window after this and decided we would barricade the second window in this room. This window gave a view of the canal as far as Upper Mount Street Bridge. While looking through this window at about 10 a.m., a neighbour named Cooper passed by. We hailed him and he looked up. On recognising us, we asked him to go to our parents and tell them where we were and that we were all right and to send along some food. After a short interval my brother Leo came along with a huge parcel. We let down a rope and he tied it to the parcel. But while doing so he was fired upon and had to take cover in the garden. While hauling up the parcel, the rope snapped and fell into the area below. Leo got down and tied it on again and we got it up safely this time. The parcel contained steak (hot), bread, butter, etc., also a note telling us how proud they, at home, were of the news from all parts of Dublin, and not to be worrying about them. The entire garrison set to work on the steak, etc., and we made a good job of it. They were George Reynolds, Jimmy Doyle, Paddy Doyle, Dick Murphy, Willie Ronan, Jim and myself. We were nearly finished the meal when we heard firing not far off and we all rushed to our posts.

I would like to tell you the exact positions of the garrison. In the drawing-room there were three windows overlooking the Bridge, and if you stood on the stairs leading from this level you would be looking through the drawing-room door and one window on to the Bridge and along Northumberland Road. This window was held by Paddy Doyle, the centre window by George Reynolds and the other by Dick Murphy. In the room directly overhead, the windows were manned by Jimmy Doyle and Willie Ronan. In the back drawing-room I have told you were two windows, one of which we barricaded with the coal, the other looking towards Upper Mount Street and with a view of Percy Place across the canal. Jim and I were posted at these windows. We were not long in this room when Reynolds came in and told Jim to go to the window overhead, also looking towards Upper Mount Street and Percy Place. It was now about twelve noon, and when he had done so, I saw a man in English uniform running from Percy Lane along Percy Place and up the steps of a house. I fired for the first time from my Howth gun, and for that matter from any other rifle! I do not know what happened to me, or how long I was unconscious. In the excitement I did not heed the lectures and did not hold the weapon correctly. The result was, the butt hit me under the chin and knocked me out. When I came to I discovered that a large piece of the granite window sill had vanished. I had received a good lesson, and for the remainder of the scrap I remembered it was a Howth gun I had to deal with!

On looking towards Percy Place, I discovered several of the enemy looking for cover. I fired again and again until the rifle heated so much it was impossible to hold it. I heard Jim blazing away overhead and went up to see how he was doing. When I came down again there were three bullet holes in the window shutter where my head would have been had I not gone upstairs. This volley could only have been fired from

St. Mary's Church in Haddington Road. The angle from the shutter to the bullet marks on the carpet proved this. The carpet was scorched in three places.

Now we seemed to be missing all the fun, as there was terrific firing from the front of the house. I called Jim and when he came down we went to the middle window in the drawing-room. From here we could see terrible confusion among the enemy. They were being attacked from 25 Northumberland Road, held by Mick Malone and Jimmy Grace. Those who managed to get by "25" ran towards the Bridge and took cover anywhere they could find it, on house steps, behind trees, and even in the channels of the roadway. We kept on blazing away at those in the channels, and after a time as they were killed, the next fellow moved up and passed the man killed in front of him. This gave one the impression of a giant human khaki-coloured caterpillar. Those that managed to get under cover of the bridge, both from Northumberland Road and Percy Place, now attempted to cross the Bridge, led by an officer. They charged in small groups of about 8-12, but they did not succeed. They went down on the Bridge again, and again they made the attempt, but did not survive. By now there was a great pile of dead and dying on the Bridge. There was now some commotion in Lower Mount Street and quite a crowd of onlookers rushed on to the Bridge, led by a clergyman, and cleared it of both dead and dying. They were carried to Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital by way of the Nurses' Home. I should mention here the bravery of two girls, who ran up under fire and carried away the wounded. I learned afterwards that their names were Loo Nolan and Kathleen Pierce, and I heard they were presented with medals for valour by the English King.

From the moment the first civilian got to the Bridge not one shot was fired by either side, and when the last

civilian was out of sight the firing started again, and the Bridge was rushed as before but with the same result. Again the Bridge was filled with dead and dying, and again cleared by the civilians who now had white sheets to carry the wounded on.

During the latter fight Paddy Doyle would say, "Boys, isn't this a great day for Ireland", and little sentences like this. He was very proud to live to see such a day. After some time Paddy was not saying anything. Jim spoke to him and got no reply. He pulled him by the coat and he fell over into his arms. He was shot through the head. We told Dick Murphy about him and we three said a prayer for his soul.

In our window we had a small red covered settee as an arm rest. This was on fire, and Jim used a soda water siphon to extinguish the flames. He then put it to his lips for a drink and was handing it to me when it was hit by a bullet and burst into pieces between us.

Dick Murphy was now very silent, and I turned to him and touched him but he was gone to meet his Maker.

The house was now in a terrible din. The bullets from the enemy would strike the ceiling and walls, knocking plaster down on to a grand piano, and what weird sounds! Overhead was a chandelier. It got a smack and parts of it fell on to other pieces of furniture. There were also some upholstered chairs which were hit, and they gave off shocking fumes. I believe they were using incendiary bullets.

You remember I told you of the dressmaker's model we found in the basement. Well, we put a coat on this and put it in front of a window (about six feet back in the room), and what a peppering this poor innocent thing got. It was riddled, but drew a lot of fire from our heads. The drawing-

room windows were now impossible to fire from, so Jim and I decided to go upstairs to Reynolds, Ronan and Doyle. When we crawled on all fours to the stairs what a sight! It was almost shot away. However, we kept quite flat against the wall side of the staircase and managed to reach the next landing. While going up I got a fine shock. I thought I had got one in the eye, but it was a spray from a burst water pipe!

When we got to the upper room Jimmy Doyle turned from his window and shouted to us to take cover, for God's sake. We did so and Reynolds told us to go into the back room. We went again to the window overlooking Percy Place. Here we could see the enemy crawling on their bellies under cover of the canal railings. Here there was a gateway, and we fired as they passed this. The target was a difficult one and I was not sure we were accurate until several hall doors in Percy Place opened and people streamed out with white sheets held aloft. They put bodies into them and carried them into the houses.

During the lull in the firing, while the cleaning up process was on, an old man rushed from Percy Lane and was fired on from under the wall of the canal and fell dead. I heard after that he was an old German living in the neighbourhood.

They were now massing under cover of the wall leading to the bridge and under cover of the bridge itself, but were making no attempt to cross; but several tried to rush the house from under cover of the wall on Warrington Place side of the canal. We accounted for these also.

Our Mauser ammunition was now exhausted. I had about 12 rounds of .45 revolver ammunition, and Jim had

about ten rounds for his .32 revolver. The house was smouldering in several places, the smoke and fumes were shocking. It was now about one hour before dark. We realised we could stay no longer, and prepared to leave. While doing so, poor Reynolds stood up on the drawing-room landing to fire the last shot. Whether he got his man or not we did not know, but he fell dead in our midst. We knelt and said a prayer for the repose of his soul, and also had our last look at poor Dick and Paddy. May God have mercy on their souls.

Up to this not one of the enemy got within twenty yards of Clanwilliam House. They suffered shocking losses. Their official figure for killed and wounded was something over 200, but I am sure there was much more than this lying along the Northumberland Road, on the house steps, in the channels, along the canal banks, etc., and in Warrington Place, and there were several high rank officers among them. The casualties were so great that I, at one time, thought we had accounted for the whole British Army in Ireland. What a thought! What joy! What a day! But a lot of their losses was their own fault. They made sitting ducks for amateur rifle men. But they were brave men and, I must say, clean fighters.

What were we to do now? We had barricaded ourselves in, leaving no line for retreat. Not even a line of communication. Poor Reynolds would not let us break through the walls to give us a line to the base. He would not even let us break the glass in the windows, as I have already told you; but look at them now, look at the staircase, furniture, waterpipes, ceilings, walls, everything, in fact, riddled and destroyed by fire and water.

We went to the basement and there was a door leading

into a yard. This we had barricaded with kitchen furniture. In the door was a small window about a foot square. We burst out the glass, and I lifted Jimmy Doyle out first, then Jim and Ronan, and I next crawled out myself. Jimmy Doyle did not know the neighbourhood well, and he made his way into Lower Mount Street, where he was held by some of the audience to bring along to the enemy but was rescued by some others and taken to safety. Ronan, Jim and myself went to the rear of the house and into the laneway and crossed several garden walls. We had to wait for some time to cross some of the walls, as the wounded enemy were being carried through the Nurses' Home and then through the gardens to the hospital. When this procession had ended we continued our wall crossing until we came to another lane. There was a house with an open door and we went into the hall, where we met a girl and asked her to give us a coat or overcoat to put over our uniforms. She called to her mother and told her there were Volunteers at the door who wanted a change of clothing. The mother shouted down to her, "Put them out, put them out, we will all be shot". We did not trouble them further, but continued over the walls.

The rifle fire in the vicinity was now terrific and we believed the enemy was in Mount Street and had Bolands surrounded. We were making for cover as hard as we could. I gave Ronan a push up on to a wooden shed, and he was helping Jim up when the roof caved in and landed him on top of a lot of hens. I do not know whether the rifle fire or the hens created the greatest din but I think the hens won because Ronan came out looking a sadder but a wiser man!

In the next house we discovered a door leading to the basement. It was open, and in the room we discovered a tram driver's overcoat and a lady's coat. Jim donned the lady's

coat and Ronan the tram-man's. It was tripping him up, it was so long. But it served our purpose. We now came upstairs into the hall and opened the door very carefully. We had our revolvers ready but had no cause to use them. In the next hall door were a group of people, including a pal of mine. They were looking on at the battle and were very excited. On seeing the guns in our hands they all stampeded into the hall and up the stairs. However, I called on my pal, Griffin was his name. He was very frightened and told us that the British were all along Merrion Square, in Grattan Street and Wentworth Place, and that Bolands was surrounded by them. We did not know where to turn next, so I asked him would he go up to my parents and tell them to send down food and a change of clothing (to replace the uniforms) to the stable which was in James Place, at the rere of Upper Mount Street. He consented and went off very fast. We followed him at ordinary walking pace, and going through Stephen's Lane we saw a neighbour called Paddy Mack. Jim took his cap and he started yelling, "Give me back my cap, that is my Sunday cap. I'll tell my father on you". However, we arrived at the stable, but not without opposition. The "Soldiers' Wives" had a lot of choice names for us, but our revolvers had a rather quietening effect. However, some went over to Lad Lane police station and told them that the Walshs had gone up to their stables with revolvers. We were told this afterwards.

While in the stables we were sent down a good parcel of clothing and food. While changing we received from friendly neighbours enough clothes to stock a good size secondhand clothes shop. We took our pick and decided to take shelter in the Convent of Mercy grounds, Baggot Street. We crossed the lane and scaled the wall leading into the children's playground attached to the schools. While



crossing this lane a shot was fired at us from the other end of the lane and struck the wall near us. The D.M.P. were trying to do what the British Army had failed in. In the school yard we heard voices in the basement of the Training School, and we called on them to open the door. However, they were frightened when they heard who we were, and made themselves scarce. We went on until we found ourselves in the passage leading from Baggot Street to the convent schools, and decided to lie low until dark. While here, the girls in the college were singing hymns, including "Faith of our Fathers", and "Hail Glorious St. Patrick". What peace was there in those hymns. I have never heard them sung so fervently since. The lodge man who lived in the cottage now came along and we told him to go to our parents and tell them we were still safe. He did so and came back and told us we were to go into Dennehy's coach factory nearby, and Mrs. Hearne, Dennehy's housekeeper, would give us shelter for the night. We went to her and she gave us a very much wanted meal and put us to sleep in one of the coaches in the factory.

During the morning Ronan decided he would make himself scarce, and he did. Next day we spent in Dennehy's house and in the evening we separated, Jim going to friends in Long Lane and I going to a Jack Waters in Chelmsford Road, Ranelagh. I was stopped and searched several times but was allowed to pass, and spent several days with my friend Jack. While in this house the landlady entertained the British troops to tea, which they drank sitting on the stairs just outside my friend's apartments.

My next abode was with friends named Nevin over Reddy's tobacco shop in South Richmond Street. I was on the run here until July, and Jim was in a friend's house in 63 Lower Baggot Street.

My parents had been very active in the meantime. They were on the look out for somewhere to house us in safety together, and discovered a long-lost relation, a cousin of my mother's. They lived in Granby Row, and here Jim and I were again together. We were only a few days with this family (their name was Broe) when we had a message from Father Albert and Father Augustine, the two famous priests from Church Street Priory. They invited us to visit them. We did, and were introduced to them by a Miss Allan, a sister or other relation of one of the garrison of the Four Courts, who was executed for his part in Easter Week. We told them the story I am writing for you now, and they said we would need a rest and some fresh air.

After a few days they sent for us again and told us they had secured beds for us in Beaumont Convalescent Home, Drumcondra. We spent about three weeks here, and soon got good and strong again under the care of the Rev. Mother Angelus and her good nuns. While here we adopted mother's maiden name, Kelly. I do not think we were the only "patients" on the run! But we were never caught, although "G" men, including Johnny Barton, paid several visits to the Home.

Our name had been in the "Hue and Cry" and we had to be very careful. On one occasion we were marching up the main avenue with other patients and were whistling a "rebel" song. Behind some shrubs at the end of the avenue was a tennis pitch. Father Albert and Father Augustine had been playing tennis, and, when we came in view, here they were with the tennis racquets at the "present arms". We halted and gave the salute and the "right turn" and joined them both in the next game.

After we left Beaumont, we returned to Granby Row and remained here until the last week in November. We were pretty homesick by now, and we decided to make home some night. We

did so on a Sunday night, and after a few visits we remained at home. We had to remain indoors nearly all the time, but we were more contented.

This continued until the release of the prisoners from Frongoch in December, and we decided to be released also. We did, and what a welcome home we received. I do not know where all the people came from to welcome us. Such handshakes, and even kisses. I do not ever remember the likes before or since.

Well, my Easter Week story is now at an end, but not the finish of the fight for this dear old land. And now dear Pierce, Rose, Dessy and Aileen, I have told you as far as I can remember all about my fight for freedom in Easter Week, 1916, and if I have left anything untold it is not my fault, it is my old noodle woolgathering after an interval of thirty-two years.

If I ever have any spare time in the future I will tell you my part in the years that followed, such as the Tan War and my imprisonment in Ballykinlar, etc., and whenever you have a prayer to offer never forget one for George Reynolds, Paddy Doyle and my old friend from "B" Company, Dick Murphy, and all the boys who fell in that great Week, and of course offer one now and again for your ever loving Daddy, Tom Walsh, and your Uncle Jim.

SIGNED Thomas Walsh

SIGNED James Walsh

DATE 24<sup>th</sup> Feb 1949

WITNESS Seán Brennan. Comdt.

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