

# ORIGINAL

STATEMENT BY MRS. FRANK FAHY, BELLEVUE, DUNDRUM,

CO. DUBLIN.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRÉ MILEANTA 1913-21

No. W.S. 202

In 1914 we lived at Park Place, Islandbridge. My husband, Frank Fahy, was on the staff of Castleknock College. Almost every Sunday night some of the boys visited us, Sean McDermott, Ned Daly, Seamus O'Sullivan, Con Colbert, George Irvine, Finn Lynch, Gearoid O'Sullivan, Denny McCullough, Liam Clarke. They often brought their friends along; we were like one happy family. As soon as I heard the tap-tap of Sean's stick approaching I was at the door. Sean was always joking. I never saw him in a bad humour; he was the most lovable character of the lot. He could size up a man at a glance. It was in August 1914 that Sean and Con Collins came to stay with us at my people's home near Tralee for a short holiday. I drove Sean in a pony trap to Ballyheigue Strand. On our way we met Maurice Lawlor he was cutting corn in his father's field. He came along and on the strand not far from where Roger Casement landed later in 1916 Sean gave us an exhibition of revolver shooting. Maurice had an old hat. He put it down for a target. Maurice still has that hat. Sean delighted in playing tricks on you; at one Christmas Aonach he tried to get away from a pompous bore by introducing him to me and was just going off when I whispered "I see your little game, Sean". He laughed heartily.

John Daly of Limerick stayed with us on a visit to Dublin. He could only get about in a wheel chair. We were never tired listening to his stories and his prison experiences. He, too, was a most lovable character and full of fun. We enjoyed everything in those days. We needed no cocktails to help us to enjoy life.

Some time in 1914 I joined Cumann na mBan. We attended first aid classes. We had drill and rifle practice. At home in Park Place we practised with an air rifle and the friends had a great time competing. I am afraid we left a nice-sized hole in the wall; it was lucky we didn't get through to the next house, as our neighbours were British. Frank brought in the first rifles and

and ammunition at Howth, 26th July 1914. He was at the landing of rifles at Kilcoole, Co. Wicklow on the 1st of August 1914. Sean McDermott guarded two R.I.C. men at the bridge of Kilcoole while the others were wading out for the rifles.

We were with Liam Mellowes in Sean Broderick's house, Athenry, on Sunday in July 1915, when the order to leave Ireland was read to him. As Frank was on holidays Liam asked him to carry on drilling local volunteers. Nearly every day we cycled many miles to various areas; some nights when he finished it was so late we decided to stay in Liam's tent in Ballycabalan. The people were very kind to us; it was often 1 a.m. when we cycled back to Loughrea, two R.I.C. men following us. We enjoyed our holiday immensely.

I remember marching with Cumann na mBan to Bodenstown on June 20th 1915.

Some time before the Rising, 1916, Liam Mellowes, returning from England, came to our house disguised. That night Con Colbert and Liam Clarke called; they were so pleased to see Liam they spent the night singing rebel songs and never minded the British on either side of us. They also had pillow fights; nobody got to sleep that night. A week later Liam set out for Galway at night by motor cycle combination.

On Wednesday, 19th April 1916, Commandant Kent came to our house and asked me to take an important and urgent message to Larry Lardner, Athenry. I was to travel next morning, Holy Thursday, and bring back a receipt. When I arrived in Athenry I went to Sean Broderick's house and was informed that Larry had gone to Dublin by early train. They expected him back same night I decided to await his return. In the evening I grew anxious and asked to see Eamon Corbett of whom I had heard Liam Mellowes speak very highly. I told Eamon that I had an important message for Larry Lardner and if he didn't return on the last train I would entrust the message to him. Larry didn't arrive, so Eamon

got the message and gave me a receipt. I returned to Dublin on the midnight train, got in at 4 a.m. Good Friday, got a cab (a very dirty one). At Parkgate the wheel came off. I had to go the remainder of the journey on foot. Commandant Kent called at noon. I told him <sup>what</sup> / I had done; gave him the receipt and was greatly relieved when he approved my action. I learned later that the message was an order for the rising in Athenny area.

On Holy Saturday, April 22nd 1916, I was occupied most of the day making green collars for some of the volunteers. We went to early Mass and Holy Communion Easter Sunday, expecting to go out at noon; it was only then we learned that the Rising was off. On Monday Frank got word. Miss P. Morhan called for me. I locked up the house, took my dog and canary to my sister (she was Matron of the Sanatorium, Pigeon House). I told her the Volunteers were going on a route march and that there was a possibility of their being attacked. I was going to attend the wounded and asked for iodine and bandages. She told me I was crazy. I was only half an hour gone when the shots rang out. I had some difficulty getting to Blackhall Place. Other members of Cumann na mBan were there. As we did not get any definite orders some of <sup>us</sup> went to Henry Dixon's house, Cabra Road. The place was barricaded. We expected the bridge to be blown up and expected work to do; nothing happened that night.

On Tuesday I went with some of the members to the G.P.O. I met Sean McDermott; he was in his usual good form; we were sent on to the Four Courts. I was glad to be with Frank. On our way there the people cheered us. When we got to the Four Courts we were told to take over Father Mathew Hall for the wounded. We did and the Capuchins did all they could to help us; there were some wounded to be looked after.

On Thursday I returned to the Four Courts. I was not long there when the Helga started to shell the place. I couldn't get back to Father Mathew Hall, the rifle firing was so great. I helped with the cooking etc. On Friday a goat strayed into the green of

the Courts. I milked it so we had grand tea that evening, a change from condensed milk. On Friday night the rifle firing was not quite so bad, but the sky was all lit up. I thought every place around us was on fire. On Saturday Frank told me to get back to Father Mathew Hall before the military took possession. We were very despondent when we heard of the surrender.

I heard Frank telling the men to cease fire but to stick to their guns. He was then on his way to the gate with a British Officer (prisoner in the Courts) and had sent for Comdt. Ned Daly. Later I saw Ned without his sword. He just shook his head.

I returned to Father Mathew Hall; when they heard about the surrender they didn't believe me. Frank called to the Hall to say goodbye to me. "As you are out now" I said "don't return". He told me he had given his word and should be with his men. That was the last I saw of him until the Autumn when Madge and Agnes Daly of Limerick took me to Portland Prison to see him (they were always very kind to us). I shall never forget seeing him in prison garb. We were only allowed half an hour with two warders present. I pretended to be quite cool until I got to the hotel.

On the Saturday night of the surrender I helped to take some of the wounded to Richmond Hospital. Mrs. Conlon and myself returned to the Hall as some of the younger girls were there and we thought they might be nervous, as British were surrounding the place. Next morning, Sunday 30th April, we mingled with the people going to Mass and escaped. After Mass I went to the Pigeon House Hospital; stayed there a few days; it was dreadful hearing the reports of the executions and then Frank's sentence of ten years. I knew what ten years in Portland Prison would be, having heard all about it from John Daly of Limerick. After Frank's sentence I went to Michael Foley's house (Gothic Lodge) in Cabra Road. Nora Foley came with me to our house in Park Place; it had been looted; my clothes and portable furniture were gone. I returned with Nora Foley and spent a few nights at their home. I spent one night with Mrs. T. Clarke in Richmond Road. After selling the remnants of furniture and

giving up the house, I went home to Kerry. One day a neighbour met me and started to sympathise "May God help you in the beginning of your days. I am sorry for you". "Please don't be sorry for me" I said "I am very proud of my husband.

As all my clothes were gone I wore my Cumann na mBan uniform most of the time. One day in Tralee a Munster fusilier was on furlough, saw me in uniform, jumped out on the road and saluted.

That Summer the Dalys of Limerick invited Nora Ashe and myself to spend some weeks with them in Kilkee.

I stayed in Kerry until the men were released in June 1917.

Signed: Anna Daly

Date: 11<sup>th</sup> March 1949.

Witness: Sm Cosáin

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