

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRÉ MLEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 215

ROINN



COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 215.....

Witness

Professor Michael Hayes,
20 Brighton Square,
Rathgar, Dublin.

Identity

- (a) Orderly to Comdt. E. de Valera during Holy Week 1916.
- (b) Associate of Thomas MacDonagh.

Subject

Events of Holy Week and Easter Week 1916.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil.

File No. S. 232.....

Form B.S.M. 2.

ORIGINAL



20 Brighton Sq.
Rathgar,
Dublin.

SEANAD ÉIREANN

TIGH LAIGHEAN
(Leinster House)

BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH
(Dublin)

5th January, 1949

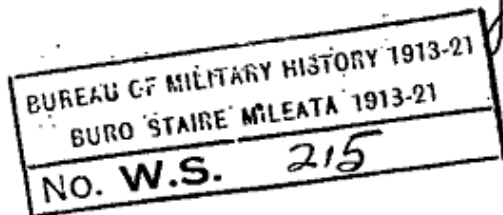
Colonel John Joyce,
Bureau of Military History,
26 Westland Row,
Dublin.

Dear John,

Here is the statement which I
promised you in our interview before Christmas.
I am only putting in as much as appears to
me to be relevant to your requirements.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Hayes



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I have no knowledge whatever of the plans for the 1916 Rising. I was never a member of the I.R.B. and had freely stated my objections to that organisation of which my father had been a prominent member. I have therefore never been asked to join. I was a member of "C" Company of the 3rd Batt. Dublin Brigade of the Volunteers. I was a colleague of Thomas McDonagh's at University College and he frequently discussed the Volunteers with me and urged me to attend courses with a view to becoming an officer. This I did not do.

In January or February 1916 McDonagh said to me one day in the College "I have great news for you, Michael, We have a standing army at last." The standing army was composed of men from London and Liverpool who were quartered at Larkfield, Kimmage, for some time before the Rising. McDonagh gave no indication that a Rising was projected and indeed his brother John told me that a few days before Easter 1916 Thomas McDonagh had discussed with him at some length ~~the~~ plans with regard to the Hardwick Street Theatre.

Thursday, 20th April, 1916;

"C" Co.

Attended parade of/3rd Battalion at Camden Row.

The Brigade was inspected by Commandant De Valera who instructed me to leave the ranks for special duty with him. I went with him to number 1 Dawson Street, where I met Charley Murphy. We both acted as Secretaries to the Commandant. That night we went from Dawson Street to 144 Great Brunswick Street, the Headquarters of St. Andrews Catholic Club. I was present at various conferences with Company Captains and Quartermasters. Each one endeavoured to get as much arms and ammunition as possible for his own Company. The arms were ~~all~~ of an assorted nature, Howth Rifles, Single Shot Martins, Short Lee-Enfields, ^{shotguns} with ammunition to match. It was expected that more than 300 men would parade and as far as my recollection serves me there were less than 300 weapons with five rounds of ammunition per man. On Friday the 21st and Saturday the 22nd I was on duty all day at 144 Great Brunswick Street and late into Saturday night.

Sunday the 23rd I saw McNeill's Order in the "Independent" at 8.30. I went almost immediately to 144. Found the Commandant, ~~and~~ who had apparently ^{and} slept there ^{and} appeared to have no knowledge of what was happening. He was very anxious to get in touch with Thomas McDonagh or Pearse. I sent messengers to various places with no result. I am not sure that I remember all the places now but they included Liberty Hall, the house of volunteers named Meldon, one of whom is still alive, and another house about Gardiner Street. Perhaps it was Sean T. O'Kelly's but I am not clear.

Failure ^{was} to contact superior officers seemed to worry the Commandant very much and I suggested going

personally to St. Enda's, Rathfarnham to see if I could contact Pearse there or get information about him. I went out on a bicycle, was let in and saw a number of people who told me that Pearse had gone out on Saturday night and had not returned. On my return journey I was overtaken on the Dodder Bridge, Rathfarnham by a motor car in which were Alderman Tom Kelly and Padraig O'Keeffe, Secretary of Sinn Fein. Both were very agitated and Alderman Kelly told me he was endeavouring to stop a slaughter. At his suggestion I went in the car with him to 144 leaving the bicycle to O'Keeffe. When we arrived at 144 I was told that MacDonagh was in the room with the Commandant. I went in to find him just on the point of leaving. He seemed in high spirits, was in uniform with high laced boots and a cloak. He spoke to me and left at once. The Commandant instructed me to make out orders for the different Companies to break up at once, go home and hold themselves in readiness for further orders. I did this. He signed the orders and on my way home I carried one personally to Hatch Street, where a number of men were collecting. That would be, I think, about 4.30 p.m.

We mobilised again on Monday morning, my Company at Earlsfort Terrace ~~instead~~ inside the grounds of University College. I was instructed to go home for a bicycle and did so. I lived near Wellington Barracks and found that the Rising was taking place. My immediate inclination was to side with MacNeil. That Monday evening I saw ~~some~~ Commandant Tom Hunter at a barricade in New Street and brought down to the barricade my rifle, ammunition and equipment. I heard that McDonagh was in charge at Jacobs which was quite convenient. On Wednesday the 26th I entered Jacobs very early in the morning having made up my mind that

this was the only course but that the venture was a hopeless one. There must have been a number of people in the Rising who, if they had been given an opportunity of coming to a conclusion would not have taken part at all. I was taken to MacDonagh, welcomed and given a revolver and a written appointment as a Lieutenant. MacDonagh did not seem to be familiar with the area, and the Captain of "C" Company who was with me, his name was Edward Byrne, thought that the place was very badly secured. We were told that arms were short and asked if we knew where any arms could be had in the neighbourhood. We volunteered to go out to ~~search~~^{certain} the houses in the area. We went to three houses in Lombard Street West, Sean Campbell's, Patrick Moloneys and No. 43, O'Briens. One of the O'Briens - Liam - was in the South Dublin Union. We went also to Thomas Atkins of Spencer Street, who was at home and he would not give us any arms and would not ~~consent~~ consent to come into Jacobs. As far as my recollections serve me, we got two revolvers and some ammunition. We met Gerald Boland and his wife in Vincent Street where they lived. He too was in difficulty with regard to MacNeil but having heard what we were doing he arranged to come to Jacobs that night with a rifle. He did so. We saw soldiers marching on the South Circular Road ~~and~~ in Emerville Avenue, I met Larry Murray, now an Assistant Secretary of the Department of Education, who had come from Cork on the previous day and reported that no Rising had taken place there, and that the line from Cork to Dublin was quite free. They had been delayed near Kildare for, he thought, the passage of troop trains to Dublin. In Heytesbury Street we met Michael O'Mullane who was then living there. He denounced John MacNeil. We told him what we were doing but for several reasons he did not find it possible to come with us.

On our return to Jacobs a priest had been in to tell ~~me~~ a story of German prisoners marching from Oldcastle, and in spite of our news MacDonagh seemed to be in a buoyant and talkative mood. I saw a great deal of him until Sunday afternoon. He never mentioned any plan for Dublin. John MacBride was also there in ordinary clothes and he expressed to me the view that the fighting should have taken place in the country. He did not seem to have any knowledge as to why Jacobs had been occupied.

On Sunday morning MacDonagh left in ^a British Military car to meet General Lee. He returned subsequently and at a meeting of officers announced that he had seen Pearse and intended to surrender. He was quite calm and spoke in simple serious language. I remember that he seemed to be quite a different man from usual ^{he} and excited in me, at any rate, great admiration. It was put to him by, I think, Seamus O'hAodha that he was himself going to his death. He said quite calmly ^{that} that might be so but he had to think of others. Seamus made a passionate speech against surrender but ^{the Commandant} was overruled. I accompanied ~~him~~ with John McDonagh to the Peter Street Gate, where a British Army car was awaiting him. He told us that those who had no uniforms had permission to get away if they could. I left immediately after him with Edward Byrne and Michael Cavanagh (Now, I think, in the Board of Works) walked up Bride Street, Heytesbury Street to Lower Clanbrassil Street, where I lived. I was not interrogated or arrested subsequently.

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