

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21
No. W.S. 227

ROINN  COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S....227.....

Witness

Mr. Henry Corr,
23 Chichester Street,
Belfast.
Identity

Member of Irish Volunteers 'B' Coy.
Belfast 1915-1916.

Subject

Activities of Irish Volunteers
Belfast 1915-1916.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil

File No. ...S.1087.....

Form B.S.M. 2.

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRS MILE #1 1913-21

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STATEMENT BY HENRY CORR

of

Irish Volunteers, 1913-1916.

I joined the Belfast Volunteers (B Company) in the spring of 1915. I was proposed by Seamus Snoddy (a non-Catholic), who lived near me at the time. The Captain was Rory Haskin, who was a non-Catholic and an ex-British soldier.

Our meetings were held in the huts at Willowbank. There we were drilled and taught the use of arms. We also went on route marches, and held recruiting meetings.

About two months before Easter Week, 1916, we had a visit from James Connolly, who gave us a lecture on fighting when the the Rising would take place. "It is a mistake," he said, "to fight only in the country - fight in the towns." He pointed out that in the towns there would be a plentiful food supply. A long discussion followed, some taking the opposite side (I mean in regard to town and country fighting).

In 1915 Commandant Padraic Pearse delivered the oration in commemoration of Robert Emmet in St. Mary's Hall. He was in uniform, and when he read Emmet's speech from the dock, he asked us to stand up as we would for the Gospel. We Volunteers formed a guard on that occasion, and afterwards marched up the Falls Road in military formation. Denis McCullough was in command.

Other officers in our Company were Cathal MacDowell and Peter Burns. I was a private.

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One of the leaders in the Volunteers was Herbert Moore Pim, but I do not know what position he held. He was very active.

During Holy Week of 1916 we received mobilisation orders for Saturday. A Company of Volunteers was to leave Belfast on Saturday afternoon, and our Company left about eight o'clock that evening, reaching Dungannon at midnight. As we left the train we saw a contingent of Cumann na mBan (of whom I recognised my two sisters and Kathleen Murphy), but we had not time to speak to them as they were getting on another train.

We marched in military formation to Coalisland under command of Peter Burns. We slept in a hall in Coalisland, and on Sunday morning we paraded and went to Mass in the town. Round about one o'clock on Sunday afternoon (I'm not quite sure about the time) Denis McCullough, Dr. MacCartan and Herbert Moore Pim arrived. We were formed into military formation and made a forced march to Cookstown. None of us knew where we were bound for, nor what was happening. We were under the impression that we were bound for Dublin, but no one told us anything. On boarding the train at Cookstown we were handed our railway tickets and found they were for Belfast. This was the first time we knew where we were going. We had no choice in the matter, as we were not asked either to fight or go home. We reached home on Sunday night, and knew nothing of the Rising in Dublin until Tuesday. I contacted several of the Volunteers during the week to see if any action was to be taken, but we had no orders, and did not see any of the officers. There was no official meeting of the Volunteers in Belfast until the prisoners were released from Frongoch.

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After which I took part in all the Volunteer activities here.

SIGNED Henry Corr.

WITNESSED John Mc Coy.

DATE 14/10/48.

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