

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21
No. W.S. 275

ROINN  COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S....275.....

Witness

Mr. Thomas McEllistrim, T.D.,
Ahane, Ballymacelligott,
Tralee,
Co. Kerry.

Identity

Lieutena nt Irish Volunteers,
Ballymacelligott Coy. 1915;

Member of I.R.B. Tralee 1915-1916.

Subject

Activities of Ballymacelligott Company
during Holy Week and Easter Sunday
1916.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil

File No. ...S. 887

Form B S.M. 2

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STATEMENT BY Mr. THOMAS McELLISTRIM, T.D.,

Ahane, Ballymacelligott, County Kerry.

I wish to give the following particulars of the activities of the Ballymacelligott Company of the Irish Volunteers for the period leading up to 1916 and afterwards.

The Ballymacelligott Company of the Irish Volunteers was formed in April 1915 and the following officers were appointed :-

Captain - Thomas O'Connor, Ahane, Ballymacelligott.

Lieutenant - Thomas McEllistrim, Ahane, Ballymacelligott.

Lieutenant - John Byrne, Ballydwyer, Ballymacelligott.

The Company engaged in drilling, training and arming.

I joined the I.R.B. some time around 1915 or early 1916. I was sworn in by Austin Stack at The Rink, Tralee. I never attended any meeting of the I.R.B. afterwards. The other two officers of the Company were also members of the I.R.B. and as far as I knew they did not attend any meetings of the I.R.B. I was never told what centre I belonged to and was never told anything about the organization.

In February 1916 the strength of the Company was 40 men. Each man was armed with a shotgun and 80 rounds of buckshot ammunition. In March 1916 during a parade of the Company in Ballymacelligott, Austin Stack discussed with the other two officers and myself the possibility of securing at short notice, forty horses and carts from Ballymacelligott which may be used for the transport of military equipment. We were able to assure him that the transport could be provided by our

Company at short notice. That was all any of us knew and we were told nothing or given any details.

Our Company got instructions to march with full equipment to The Rink in Tralee on Easter Sunday. I don't know how long before Easter Sunday that we were given these instructions, but we all knew or felt we were probably going into action as we were told that we might not be coming home that night. At the time we were given these orders we had heard nothing of any happenings in Tralee on the Good Friday nor were we told that arms were being landed. The order to mobilize in Tralee on Easter Sunday was given before Good Friday but I am unable to give the exact date. I had attended conferences at The Rink before Holy Week but at none of these meetings were we told anything except the question of arrangements for quick mobilization and preparedness, length of time mobilization would take and matters of that kind.

I was not present at any conference in Tralee on Good Friday but I have a recollection that Dan O'Mahony, Castleisland, who was then Battalion Commandant, told me afterwards when we were in Frongoch together that he was present at a conference in Tralee on that day and that whilst the conference was in session, a messenger came with a message for Austin Stack to the effect that he was wanted at the R.I.C. Barracks by Con Collins who was then a prisoner there. O'Mahony told me that Stack, who presided at the conference, told those present the nature of the message and that some of those present advised him not to go to the barracks. I know nothing further about this meeting and Dan O'Mahony is now dead.

On Easter Sunday, the Company reached The Rink, Tralee, about 10 or 11 a.m. Whilst in The Rink that day, the late P.J. Cahill introduced Captain Monteith to Thomas O'Connor, John Byrne and myself and arranged that we were to take Captain Monteith to Ballymacelligott. P.J. Cahill was in charge at The Rink that day together with Dan Healy and Michael Doyle. Cahill did not trust Monteith as he or none of us knew anything about him.

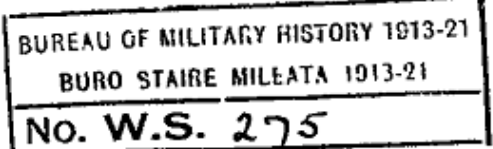
When our Company was leaving Tralee that Sunday night we took Captain Monteith with us in our ranks. Only the two other officers of the Company and myself knew that Monteith was in our ranks. When we reached Ballymacelligott, Monteith was first taken to the house of John Byrne, Ballydwyer and there it was arranged by O'Connor, Byrne and myself that Monteith was to come with me. I took him to my home at Ahane where he stayed with me until the following Wednesday evening during which time I was his sole guard. On the Wednesday night, O'Connor, Byrne and myself removed Monteith to the home of Arthur Lenihan, Ballywarsical, Castleisland, where he was kept in safety. From there he was removed later to Limerick.

In May 1916, O'Connor, Byrne and I were arrested by British Forces. We were prisoners for four months and were together in the following prisons :- Tralee Gaol, Richmond Barracks, Dublin, Wakefield, Wormwood Scrubbs and Frongoch Internment Camp. After our release from prison the Ballymacelligott Company of the Irish Volunteers was again organised and I was elected Captain of the Company.

Signed: Thomas McEllistam

Date: 8th July 1949.

Witness: M. Blaney





DÁIL ÉIREANN

TIGH LAIGHEAN
(Leinster House)

Ballymacelligott. BAILE ATHA CLIATH
29th July 1948 (Dublin)

Secretary,
Military History 1913 -1921

A Chara,

statement

I attach copy of ~~XXXXXXX~~ given by me to your Bureau

I corrected a mistake which appears in the statement. I thought
I had better let you know.

Mise, le meas,

J. M. Ellis

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Witness: _____

