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ROINN COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 304

Witness

Mr. James Coughlan,
10 Roebuck Avenue,
Mount Merrion,
Dublin.

Identity

Member of Irish Volunteers,
'C' Company, 4th Battalion,
Dublin Brigade 1914-1916.

Subject

(a) National activities 1914-1916;

(b) South Dublin Union Easter Week 1916.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil

File No. S.1337

Form B.S.M. 2.

COPY

ORIGINAL

10 Roebuck Avenue,
Mount Merrion,
Blackrock, Co. Dublin.

June 16th, 1947.

The Secretary,
Bureau of Military History,
Dublin.

A Chara,

I enclose herewith (written on eighteen numbered pages) a statement of my association with the Rising of 1916, also an appendix (on two pages) containing such answers as I am able to give to your Questionnaire which are not dealt with in the statement.

In the interests of accuracy, for the purposes of verification or otherwise, the Bureau has my permission to quote any or as many parts of my statement as may be considered necessary, to any other surviving participants in the Rising; but on no account must my complete statement, or a copy of it, be allowed to be in the possession of any person not engaged in an official capacity by the Bureau of Military History. I shall be grateful if the Bureau will notify me as to what extent my statement has been verified, contradicted or corrected, after analysis and comparison with other persons' statements.

Since my statement has been hurriedly written, contains alterations, may be in parts illegible, and is not in paragraphs, I wish to have my manuscript

returned to me as soon as the Bureau has made a typescript copy of it.

At a later date, I hope to be able to furnish some information and documents dealing with the period between the Rising of 1916 and the Truce of 1921.

Mise, le meas,

(Signed) JAMES J. COUGHLAN.

STATEMENT OF MR. JAMES J. COUGHLAN,
10, Roebuck Avenue, Mount Merrion,
Blackrock, Co. Dublin.

I joined the Volunteers in the fall of 1914, some time after the expulsion of John Redmond and his nominees from the Volunteer Executive. I felt that the movement had been purified by the subsequent "split", and thus had become an organisation worthy of support. I had taken a keen interest in its progress since its formation, but refrained from joining earlier because it contained an undesirable element, including one of the speakers at the inaugural meeting in the Rotunda in 1913, to whom I had an objection. This speaker (Kettle was his name, I think) was an employer who, in concert with other employers, dismissed their employees because they had joined a certain trades union.

From my time of joining until the Rising in 1916, I did not receive all the military training available to my comrade volunteers, as I was employed on overtime work until 9.30 each evening (except Saturdays and Sundays). Some seven or eight weeks before the Rising, I contracted German Measles and was sent to Cork Street Fever Hospital. Within a week I was cured, but became infected with Scarlet Fever in the Hospital, and spent another five or six weeks in isolation wards, first in Cork Street

Hospital and afterwards in Beneavin Convalescent Home. Because of the scarcity of beds for new patients, I was discharged from the convalescent home about a week before the normal period, and arrived hom either at the beginning of Holy Week, or at the end of the week preceding Holy Week.

During my stay in the convalescent home, I was kept in touch with events by a comrade volunteer, Tom Doran, from whom I gathered that significant things were developing in the volunteers. I accordingly lost no time in contacting my unit ("C" Company, 4th Battalion) and attended a parade of what appeared to be the whole battalion in Larkfield, Kimmage, on Good Friday night. As I approached Battalion H.Q. I noticed an unusually large number of D.M.P. men in the vicinity. At this time there was a resident garrison in Larkfield, composed mostly of volunteers who had recently been resident in Britain. These men were always armed and were under the command of George Plunkett. I understood that they were employed making hand grenades, pikes, bayonets for shot-guns, etc. On that night, it was evident that Larkfield was strongly guarded, as several of the garrison, including George Plunkett, were in the vicinity of the approaches to our drill hall, openly armed.

During the night we were addressed by P.H. Pearse, who made it fairly obvious that we would be on active service in the near future. Later, our

company commander, Tom McCarthy, chatting with us informally as we stood "easy", said: "Well, boys, it looks as if it won't be long before we'll be having a rap at the Sasannach". There was other unusual activity that night. Large amounts of rifles and ammunition were in evidence, and were issued to volunteers who, like myself, had not previously owned a rifle. We were also all given 2/6d., with instructions to use the money to provide ourselves with emergency rations before Sunday. Proceeding homewards after the parade with three comrades, two of us carrying rifles and ammunition, we were shadowed by a D.M.P. man until our party split up as we neared our homes. (It was then about midnight).

On Easter Saturday forenoon, returning from a visit to relatives in the North Circular Road district, I paused to look into the engineering works of Watt and Wilson's in Smithfield, through the open gateway. I had been standing very few minutes when a voice beside me said: "Día dhuit". I answered "Día's Muire dhuit" and, looking around, saw the khaki-clad figure of a soldier of the Irish Guards regiment. "Is Pádraig", said he, and then he started in English a conversation on the political situation. I was on my guard, expressed no opinions, and let him do all the talking. I first suspected he might be a secret service man dressed up; then, as he appeared to have drink

taken, I guessed his conversation would end with a touch for the price of a drink. My guess was right, whatever about my suspicions. Some of his remarks, especially his final one, were interesting. He told me his name (which I think was Prendergast) and that he was the rake of a good south of Ireland family, and that he and the ~~four~~ five other survivors of his battalion had come to the conclusion that it was time they did something for their <u>own</u> country; and also that he already had given several rifles to "the boys". His parting remark was: "We will eat our Easter egg in peace - after that, I won't say".

Late on the same evening I called at Volunteer H.Q. in 2, Dawson Street to buy a new haversack. Except for one person - Barney Mellowes - the place seemed deserted. The fireplace contained a large heap of burnt papers, and the office had the appearance of a complete evacuation - the usual office furniture and stationery, etc., were missing. Enquiring about a haversack, Barney informed me that I was lucky - there was just one left. (It appeared to be the only article left in the place). As he refused payment for the haversack, I asked him why, and he answered with a grin: "You will know soon enough".

Easter Sunday morning brought mobilisation orders, countermanding orders, and finally orders to remain in touch with our homes for further orders.

On Easter Monday morning I received a mobilisation order about ten o'clock. The point of mobilisation stated was Emerald Square, the time 11 a.m. Rations for eight hours were to be carried, also arms and full supply of ammunition. Full service equipment was to be worn, including overcoat, haversack, water-bottle and canteen, and all men having cycles or motor cycles were to bring them.

I cycled to Emerald Square and, finding that my bicycle would not be further required, left it in the house of people there, known to be friendly. I was armed with the Martini-Enfield rifle I had received on Good Friday and, at least, fifty rounds of rifle ammunition. (I may have had 100 rounds - I am certain only of the 50 which were carried in a canvas sling similar to those issued to the British troops). The rifle had a bayonet with a 23" blade. I also had a Smith and Wesson .38 revolver, with 75 rounds of ammunition. My equipment consisted of leather belt and shoulder straps, leather ammunition pouches (which were full), revolver holster, bayonet frog, haversack and water-bottle. Except for a pair of grey green puttees, I was not in uniform.

We moved off from Emerald Square, down Cork Street and into Marrowbone Lane. We marched in column of fours with fixed bayonets and rifles at the slope. We had only proceeded a short distance when I saw our company commander (Tom McCarthy) running

alongside us, apparently to take up his position at the head of our company. As he passed the rank I was in, he asked if our rifles were loaded and, on being informed they were not, said: "Well, for God's sake get something into them quickly". We accordingly loaded as we marched along. (My revolver, I always kept loaded). Noticing a volunteer on my left attempting to load a shotgun which was fitted with a bayonet, the point of which was hopping over the cobblestones, I remarked to Section Commander Sean Kelly, who was on my right, that we were likely to have casualties before we went into action if the loading of shot-guns on the march was proceeded with. Acting on my suggestion, Kelly had shot-guns exempted from the orders to load. We were halted when we reached one of the entrances to Marrowbone Lane distillery. Here a fairly large detachment of our battalion, accompanied by some Cumann na mBan and supplies on carts moved into the distillery. The remainder of us then marched via Basin Lane and James's Street to the South Dublin Union. As we approached the entrance, a section of our company with our three company officers crossed the road towards Roe's distillery.

Entering the South Dublin Union with the remnants of the battalion, I found myself with about a dozen other volunteers facing the front gate, under

the command of an officer from another company - Gerald Murray. The remainder of our party had meanwhile moved to other positions within the Union precincts. The gates were then closed, and we were ordered by G. Murray to erect a barricade in front of the church which is opposite the main gates. G. Murray informed us that the barricade was to be used as a firing position for us, in order to cover the retreat of the men from Roe's distillery. As work was proceeding on the barricade, a man whom I understood was a Dr. McNamara approached and upbraided us for the damage being done. (A cab had been turned on its side, and the garden borders around the church were being dug for clay to fill boxes and bags, etc.). G. Murray said to him: "My dear man, calm yourself, we are only defending our lives". Dr. McNamara replied: "Who the bloody hell is going near you"; and he proceeded to the office at the side of the main gate. I watched him and saw through the window of the office that he had lifted the telephone receiver. I immediately reported this to G. Murray who shouted: "Stop that man, he is telephoning to the enemy". I doubled to the office and, with my rifle at the "On Guard", ordered him to drop the 'phone. He at first ignored my order whereupon I repeated it in a louder and more menacing tone, at the same time giving him a light prod of the bayonet in the shoulder. (I had spent some time on Saturday sharpening the point and blade

edge.) He then turned to me and said: "I'll get your name and give it to the - ". He left the sentence unfinished as, by this time, I had been joined by some other volunteers who dismantled the 'phone while I kept him covered.

Shortly after this incident we heard heavy rifle fire to the west of our position (covering the main gate). This rifle fire had been in progress for a while when a volunteer brought a message to G. Murray, who announced that the Vice-Commandant wanted two volunteers for special duty out in the grounds. Volunteer William McDowell and myself volunteered, and were ordered by G. Murray to report to Cathal Brugha whom we saw approaching from a westerly direction. There were about six inmates lounging against the easterly wall of the bakehouse watching us, and C. Brugha ordered us to bring two of them with us out into the grounds where they were required to carry in some wounded volunteers. He directed us to gain access to the grounds through a door in the wall beyond the block of buildings adjoining (and south of) the Nurses' Home. Going through this door, we found ourselves facing the fields lying to the west of the Nurses' Home and adjoining buildings. At about thirty yards to our right we saw about five volunteers in extended formation in the prone firing position. Between them and us was a barbed wire fence which we crossed

and took up a position on their left, meanwhile ordering the two inmates to crawl on their bellies to the end of the line of men on our right, where there was a wall bounding a lane running south from Mount Brown to the rear of the Nurses' Home. This wall, I judged, would afford protection to the inmates while they were waiting to do the job required of them.

As we dropped to the prone position, I asked a volunteer on our right for information as to the enemy's location. He indicated that they were directly to our front (we were facing west) and this was confirmed by the enemy immediately, as we found ourselves under fire from that direction - the bullets after whistling close by struck the wall behind us a few inches above ground level. There was little or no cover, only a slight fold in the ground, and the enemy were concealed from my view by a hedge which ran nearly parallel to our position about fifty yards away. Each time I raised my head to look along the sightsof my rifle, I heard bullets whistle close to my ears. I advised my comrade, McDowell (whom I knew had only joined the volunteers on Good Friday, and could have had little or no training), to keep his head down and his heels flat to the ground. We lay in this position for some time unable to get a shot at the enemy.

After a while, I received a verbal message

that had been passed along the line of volunteers on my right. It was that the last man on the left of the line was to go into the Union and open the door in the wall at the back of the Nurses' Home. Being the last man in the line, I carried out the order, returning to the Union by the same route I had used on C. Brugha's orders, being lucky in negotiating the barbed wire fence a second time without mishap, as this area was in full view of the enemy. After locating and opening the door in the wall at the rear of the Nurses' Home, I stood at the "on guard" position inside the door so that I could bayonet, if necessary, any person entering. Several volunteers came through this door singly, and after a while Captain Sean McGlynn appeared and ordered me to barricade the door up for the night, as all our men were in. (Although this door was almost screened from the west by the wall of the lane, the wall ended near the door, which was thus exposed to fire from a south-westerly direction. The enemy must have seen this door being used as a few bullets came through it a few inches above ground level. I guessed then that some of the enemy must have been located in the direction of Rialto.)

As I had not seen my comrade, McDowell, come in through this door, I pressed Sean McGlynn as to whether he was sure all our men were in. He assured me that there were none of our men left outside -

alive. Thus I guessed McDowell had been killed, and wondered what had happened to the wounded men and the two inmates whom I had expected to see come in through this door. S. McGlynn helped me complete the barricading of the door and, leaving me on sentry duty, entered the Nurses' Home by the back door.

By this time the rifle fire had died down, only an occasional shot being heard, and I became aware that the upper rooms in the back of the Nurses' Home were occupied by our men. Being alone and bored through inactivity, I sloped my rifle and paced, sentry fashion, up and down the yard enclosed by walls which I was in at the back of the Nurses' Home. I looked through the windows of a ground floor room, and saw a group of our officers in uniform studying a large map on a table with the aid of electric torches. It was now nearly dusk. The group of officers were Commandant Eamonn Ceannt, Vice-Commandant Cathal Brugha, Captain William T. Cosgrave, Captain Douglas French-Mullen, Captain Sean McGlynn, Lieutenant Liam O'Briain, Lieutenant "Wilsie" Byrne. I also saw Peadar Doyle (battalion Q.M. who later became Lord Mayor of Dublin) near the fireplace preparing tea. I then took up a position standing "at ease" outside one of the windows of this room. After a while Peadar Doyle opened the window and asked me if I would like some tea. I said I would, and then Eamonn Ceannt told me to come inside. I stood inside the room near the

door and drank tea with the others, most of whom were also standing. W.T. Cosgrave asked that someone contact his step-brother, Frank Burke, and ask him for the tin of cocoa which he had in his haversack. During the tea, Eamonn Ceannt chatted informally with the other officers and seemed exceedingly cheerful. He related how he had sent a message to the officer i/c. of the British troops asking for a temporary truce, to enable both sides to collect their dead and wounded, and how he had received a brief reply from a British N.C.O. that negotiations were impossible as all their (British) officers were dead. After the tea, all the garrison of the Nurses' Home, with the exception of those on sentry duty, were assembled in this room. Eamonn Ceannt produced a copy of the Proclamation which he read, and also addressed us on the circumstances leading to the Rising. He stated that the Volunteer Executive had information that the British Government were about to hold a secret session of Parliament to discuss negotiating a peace settlement with Germany; that a solemn military alliance between this country and Germany had been signed on our behalf by Roger Casement and on Germany's behalf by the Kaiser; that the object of the Rising was to establish Ireland's position under international law as a belligerent nation taking part in the Great War, and thus be entitled to representation at the forthcoming Peace Conference.

He explained that McNeill's cancellation of the mobilisation orders for Easter Sunday was due to the capture of Casement, the loss of the arms expected from Germany, and the obvious knowledge by the British of our intention to revolt. He stated that the Volunteer Executive had considered the British authorities' reaction to the cancellation of the Sunday mobilisation, and a majority had decided that sooner than have each individual volunteer resisting arrest in his own home, thereby endangering the lives of his womenfolk (as he was pledged not to surrender his arms without a fight), it would be better to proceed with the original plan, as far as possible, and so the Rising was re-ordered for Easter Monday.

There was no further firing that day either by us or the enemy (that I can remember noticing) but we became aware that our occupation of the South Dublin Union was confined to two isolated positions - the Nurses' Home and the Board Room, and that some of our battalion had been routed from their positions in the southern end of the S.D.U.

Early on Tuesday morning E. Ceannt directed and took part in the barricading of the front entrance of the Nurses' Home. In addition to securing the entrance door, boards were nailed across the framework of the porch doors, which were closed

and nailed up, and the space between doors and boards filled with rubble. This formed a second barricade - almost a wall - a couple of yards behind the front entrance.

On the same morning, looking across at the hospital facing the front of the Nurses' Home, I noticed several of the windows opened about three inches at the bottoms only, and on some windows a small patch (about the size of a penny) of the glass was transparent, whereas the rest of the pane was translucent, as were all the panes in the lower halves of all the windows. An officer's attention was drawn to this, with the suggestion that it might indicate British occupation. We were ordered under no circumstances to fire on the hospital, and to the best of my knowledge this order was obeyed throughout the whole of the week.

Later that morning a shot was fired from that hospital which killed Frank Burke, who was in a front room above the ground floor. I was later detailed to dig a grave for his body, and had a grave in the yard at the rear almost completed when his body was brought down and laid on the ground, wrapped in a sheet, beside the grave. Other arrangements had evidently been decided upon in the meantime, as E. Ceannt ordered the opening of the door in the back wall, and supervised the carrying

of the body by an unarmed party, carrying a Red Cross flag, to a prominent position in a field to the south-west of the Nurses' Home. While this operation was in progress, the remainder of us stood at the "ready" to repel any attack and cover the retreat of our men should the Red Cross not be respected. (There was no incident, however).

The remainder of this day (Tuesday) was uneventful, most of the time (between periods of sentry duty) being spent improving our defences - sandbagging windows, etc. This was no easy task, as all the windows were large and the staircase was particularly vulnerable, being exposed for most of its length to the view of very large windows. We had our meals in the kitchen, which was on the north or opposite side of the hall to the room in which I first saw our officers in conference. Officers and other ranks dined together, and E. Ceannt chatted informally on those occasions. Cathal Brugha seemed the most silent member of the garrison. I noticed him most as he sat at the open back door of the home cleaning his automatic pistol, which had a wooden holster which also served as a shoulder butt, like a rifle. (E. Ceannt was similarly armed.) Cathal Brugha spoke (when he did) quietly, and always appeared composed and contented. Eamonn Ceannt was always cool and cheerful. I felt confident of the ability of these two men - but particularly E.

Ceannt, to lead us in whatever the future might hold.

Communication with the outside world was kept up by a friendly neighbour, Mr. Tallon, an employee of the South Dublin Union, who lived next door to the Nurses' Home (on the south side of it). W.T. Cosgrave knew him personally, and we received food and messages from him over the garden wall between his house and the yard at the rear of the Nurses' Home.

Wednesday was spent further improving defences (between periods of sentry duty), the only incident of note being our capture of the bake-house. For this operation I was detailed by Section-Commander John V. Joyce to cover the bake-house door through a loophole in a sandbagged window. While I kept my rifle sights aligned on the door, other volunteers broke through a wall into the bake-house. It was found to be unoccupied, however, but for my small part in the operation I was awarded a night's rest free of any sentry duty.

On Thursday a number of our garrison were engaged in further wall-boring operations in the buildings intervening between the Nurses' Home and the Board Room (situated over the main gate in James's Street), with the object of establishing communication with the garrison in the Board Room. I was not detailed for any of this work but was on sentry duty at a window in an upstairs room in the back of the

Nurses' Home in the afternoon when heavy fire opened up on our position. Being aware that E. Ceannt and the larger portion of our garrison were absent from the Nurses' Home on the boring operations, and finding it impossible to get a glimpse of the enemy thro' the window, I was at (owing to the enemy's fire), I made a quick survey of the other rooms at the back of the Nurses' Home. I found that well directed and concentrated fire was being maintained against all windows in the back of our building. Many of the bullets split diagonally the brickwork at the sides of the windows and, coming from many angles, effectively prevented us from replying to the fire. In a short while the interior of our building had a dense cloud of plaster dust. Guessing that this continuous fire was but the preliminary to an assault, I moved down to the first landing which overlooked the front entrance. I could see over our porch barricade and through the windows at the side of the front door. On the landing close to the balusters there was a small rectangular dust-bin filled with earth and a couple of small sandbags. I adopted a kneeling position behind the dustbin sighting my rifle on the window at the north side of the front door. Soon I saw khaki-clad figures move across my sights and I opened fire. I shouted to inform my comrades that the British were in front of our building, and was soon joined by three or four volunteers. Douglas

French-Mullen was on my left - Jack Doherty on my right. We kept up a rapid fire with our rifles. Above the noise of our own and the enemy's fire I detected a heavy pounding against the wall on my right, which I suspected was the enemy battering down some part of the wall. My suspicions were confirmed when I saw a khaki cap appear over the top of our porch barricade, between that barricade and the front door. I heard a British voice say: "Are you alright there, Sergeant?", and the reply: "Yes, Sir, but we'll want some more bombs, Sir". "A grenade - quick" - I whispered to French-Mullen. He obtained one (canister-pattern) and I watched him as he lighted the fuze and leaned over the balustrade. I cursed him inwardly as he counted "One - two - three" loudly (as I felt he was giving the enemy warning) before he threw the grenade. Uncertain of his aim, I ducked behind the dust-bin and the grenade exploded - on which side of the barricade I am not sure.

From then on, there were plenty of British grenade explosions on our side of the porch barricade and we kept up a rapid fire into the porch. On first seeing the enemy in our porch, I considered my single loading Martini-Enfield too slow - dropped it - and used my revolver. This weapon became defective when it got hot - it opened at the top after every shot.

After some time the grenades stopped coming in and we heard a voice below us say: "I'm done, boys, retreat into the next building". Peering through the cloud of dust, we saw the figure of Cathal Brugha lying in the hall, between the kitchen door and the porch barricade. He repeated the order, which I felt reluctant to comply with, as I was unacquainted with the next building, and the disposition of the enemy relative to it, while I felt our own position was fairly secure, and that we were effectively holding the enemy.

The Volunteers on my right proceeded downstairs and carried Cathal Brugha into the kitchen. I followed with French-Mullen and noticed as we reached the hall that he (French-Mullen) limped slightly. He leaned on my shoulder and said: "Do you know - I believe I've been hit - I feel very hot about the leg", and he smiled as if he was very happy. We then proceeded with the other volunteers through a small yard to the rear and north of the kitchen, then through a hole in a wall into a yard to the west of a large dormitory building, lying to the west of the bakehouse. We gained access to the ground floor of this building through a small window set high in the west wall. On entering, we found ourselves in the company of Eamonn Ceannt, W.T. Cosgrave and what appeared to me to be the remainder of the original Nurses' Home

garrison.

I noticed that the door (facing south) of this dormitory was all glass and unprotected, and in the centre of the room, in line with this door and with his back to it, was an old man, an inmate, sitting at a barrel shaped stove. Seeing his position to be dangerous, I took a mattress and bedclothes off a bed, and made up a bed on the floor close to the east wall, where I thought he would be out of the line of possible fire; escorted him to the bed and put him lying down on it. Although he appeared to be in an advanced stage of senility, he obviously understood my intentions and thanked me with prayers.

Meanwhile, on E. Ceannt's orders, the glass door referred to was being hurriedly barricaded with bedsteads; a couple of mattresses were piled against the bedsteads; and two snipers, Sean Treacy and another, manned this quickly improvised firing position, from where they effectively dealt with any of the enemy who exposed themselves to their view. To the right of the glass door (looking from the inside) and in view from outside through a window was a stairway leading to the upper floor. French-Mullen went up this stairs to investigate if the upper floor was occupied, while E. Ceannt tried to cover the window with a curtain. Satisfied that the enemy were not overhead, E. Ceannt then took up a kneeling position alongside W.T. Cosgrave, on the

east side of the room, and facing the doorway. I adopted a similar position close by them. Except for the two snipers behind the mattresses, the rest of the garrison were lying or kneeling in firing positions on the floor in various places around the room, with bayonets fixed, awaiting a possible assault on our new position. There were no shots fired at us in this dormitory (to the best of my knowledge).

After a while E. Ceannt announced that, as the Nurses' Home was still under fire, the enemy could not have occupied it. He asked for two men to accompany him to the Nurses' Home to investigate. Volunteer Moore and myself went with him. As we re-entered the Nurses' Home (by the same route as we had left) I heard orders being given by Cathal Brugha to an imaginary force of Volunteers. I cannot remember his words exactly, but they were to the effect that ten men were to be put in one position, and ten more in another. He spoke as if he were addressing subordinate officers. My first impression was that he was delirious, but subsequently I surmised that his intention was to bluff the enemy. E. Ceannt made a quick survey of our porch barricade and ground floor rooms. Seeing the barricade was intact he ordered Volunteer Moore to go back to the dormitory we had just left and to bring back the rest of the garrison to the Nurses' Home. He then went over to

Cathal Brugha and spoke to him. When the remainder of the garrison came back, Ceannt ordered some of the officers and others armed with revolvers to occupy the landing overlooking the hall and to fire into the porch between the barricades. Others set about dressing Cathal Brugha's wounds. The enemy's fire had by this time subsided, and shortly afterwards ceased altogether. (We later learned that the enemy completely evacuated the South Dublin Union that night, leaving their casualties, six dead and nine wounded, after them. I did not see their bodies myself, but some of my comrades who relieved them of their ammunition (one I remember is Tommy Boylan) told me of it - and I remember that any of our men armed with Lee-Enfield rifles had more ammunition at the time of the surrender than they had going into action on Easter Monday.)

Among the enemy's casualties was an R.I.C. man, dressed in R.I.C. trousers but with khaki tunic. E. Ceannt accounted for this man, as I heard him refer to it afterwards with obvious satisfaction. (It appeared that a number of R.I.C. men took part in the attack on Thursday night. These were from Portobello Barracks where they were undergoing special training to become non-commissioned officers in the British Army, and it is interesting that they were really the first "Black and Tans").

After Cathal Brugha's wounds had received first aid, his uniform was completely removed and he was carried across to the hospital.

On the following morning E. Ceannt spoke to us about the previous evening's engagement. He said that it was but natural that our first experience of grenade attack should have a somewhat demoralising effect, but that the greatest value of the grenade was its noise value, and he pointed out how little damage had been actually done by the grenades. (When E. Ceannt spoke on that occasion I formed the opinion that he was not aware at that time that C. Brugha had ordered the evacuation of the Nurses' Home, nor was he aware of the reception the enemy had got from the first landing when they first penetrated to the hall porch. My own impression at the time was that it was the enemy who were demoralised when their assault party came under enfilade fire from our snipers in the dormitory, a position which previously showed no evidence of occupation or preparation for defence.)

There was no further engagement during the rest of the week, the time being spent further improving defences and communications with the Board Room. The doors of the rooms south of the staircase in the Nurses' Home were nailed up and barricaded, so that we occupied practically only half of this house for the rest of the week.

I think it was on Saturday that I heard it said

that information had been received that British artillery observers had been in the vicinity of the South Dublin Union. There was some discussion as to us having advance warning of any artillery bombardment, because of the evacuation of other buildings in the vicinity that would precede such a bombardment; and there was also some discussion about our possible evacuation and our chances of fighting our way out to the country. These discussions only took place among some of my comrades - I don't remember any remarks from E. Ceannt on the subject.

On Sunday afternoon we were assembled and addressed by E. Ceannt about the surrender. He outlined the situation that had developed in the G.P.O. area, and read P.H. Pearse's order to surrender. He stated that he would not order us to surrender - any man wishing to make his getaway could do so - but that having behaved like soldiers from the beginning, he would like us to behave like soldiers to the end. "As for us", he said, referring to the signatories of the proclamation, "we know what will happen to us", and then referring to ourselves he said that he expected "our friends in America" would look after our dependants. Later we formed up outside the buildings we had occupied, and a British Major appeared. I heard him ask E. Ceannt where were the rest of his men and seemed surprised at the answer, "They're all here". Our total strength for the whole of the South Dublin

Union at the surrender was forty-four all ranks.

With the British Major in front, alongside E. Ceannt, as our only escort, we marched to the place of surrender, a street joining Patrick Street and Bride Street, where are situated the Iveagh Baths. We carried our firearms fully loaded. E. Ceannt halted us, turned us into line and gave us the order, "Ground arms", and then handed over his weapons and equipment to the British officer in charge. The British troops then collected our weapons and equipment, unloading each firearm as they dumped it into a lorry. We were then marched under British military escort to Richmond Barracks, together with the survivors of the Boland's Bill area and Jacobs Factory garrisons, whom we had seen arrive at the place where we surrendered.

All our garrison were together in one small barrack room, which barely accommodated us when we lay on the floor to sleep. The only sanitary provision for night use was a large bucket in a corner of the room. For rations we were given British emergency rations, biscuits and canned beef. There were no facilities to even wash our hands and we were kept herded in the same room all day that we slept in at night. Soon the atmosphere became anything but pleasant. Occasionally E. Ceannt would get us to open up all the windows and lead us in such

simple physical exercises as we had room to perform, but we were destined to lose his leadership very soon.

One day all the prisoners, irrespective of rank, were herded together in the barrack gymnasium. We sat on the floor along one side of the room. I found myself sitting near Major McBride and other prominent figures in the Republican movement. Those of us who wished to visit the latrines, went in threes under heavy escort. Returning from one such visit, I was questioned by Thomas McDonagh as to how I managed to get a wash. I had <u>not</u> washed - it was my fair skin and hairless face (I had not started to shave then) that deceived him. After some time some British officers scrutinised us, any of us who looked young were questioned as to age, and those under nineteen years were ordered to the opposite side of the room. I was among those questioned and answered, "Over nineteen". When all the under-nineteens had been separated from us, they were marched out of the gymnasium.

Next we had a visit from about twenty "G" men (detectives from Dublin Castle) who also carefully scrutinised us. On sight (without any questioning as to name) they picked out our leaders and other prominent republicans and ordered them to the opposite side of the room. I recognised a good number of

those on the opposite side of the room as men who were subsequently courtmartialled. When E. Ceannt was picked out, he called the attention of the senior British officer present to one of our garrison, a volunteer named Fogarty, who had become mentally deranged. (Fogarty, I learned from my comrades on Tuesday, was in the same room with Frank Burke when the latter was killed on that morning. Fogarty, I was told, lighted his pipe when near a window. F. Burke leaned across from the other side of the window to light his cigarette from Fogarty's lighted match, and presented an easy target to a British soldier in the hospital across the roadway. As F. Burke fell, with a bullet through the left side of the neck, an officer, Lieutenant "Wilsie" Byrne, I think, entered the room and, sizing up the situation, exclaimed to Fogarty: "You are responsible for that man's death". Shortly after this incident - when I was told of it - I visited the room and saw F. Burke's body lying in the pool of blood where he died. From the instant of F. Burke's death until some weeks later Fogarty was mentally deranged, and during the remainder of Easter week with us he was kept disarmed, and a volunteer - Jim Kenny - was detailed to keep him company and out of harm's way. It was distressing at times to watch Fogarty's reactions. On one occasion during a meal in the kitchen W.T. Cosgrave

was relating an incident that happened at a Dublin Corporation meeting, at which one member called another "Traitor". Fogarty muttered that W.T. Cosgrave was referring to him (Fogarty), and Jim Kenny subsequently had trouble trying to convince him to the contrary.) Thus E. Ceannt's thoughts on being separated from us to face courtmartial were in consideration of one of the humblest of those who had served under him.

When all the "G" men's victims had been marched out of the gym., the remainder of us were made to file singly past a table lined with "G" men. They wrote down our names, addresses and occupations. When I gave my name, a "G" man supplied my address and place of employment. This surprised me, as I little thought that so insignificant a person as myself was known to them. We were then marched back to barrack rooms, into which we were herded until our time came for deportation.

I was among those deported and lodged in Knutsford Detention Barracks on May 3rd.

I was subsequently transferred to Frongoch Internment Camp,. where I was prisoner No. 1.

SIGNED: James John Coughlan

DATE: 14th October 1949

WITNESS: Wm. Gerry Kinsella

A P P E N D I X

ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE NOT INCLUDED IN MY ACCOUNT OF MY ASSOCIATION WITH THE RISING.

Ref. Page 13 (of Questionnaire) - Question 9.

I had a conversation with an employee of the South Dublin Union recently, who stated that Eamonn Ceannt made a detailed survey of the South Dublin Union about a month prior to the Rising. I suggest that this man, a wardmaster, I think, with thirty-eight years employment in the South Dublin Union, should be contacted, as I believe he can give some useful information. This could be arranged through Seamus Murphy.

Ref. Page 15 - Question 22 (also Page 22, Question 2).

Personally I was satisfied, as a result of P. H. Pearse's address on Good Friday night, and the other events of that night, that the Easter "manoeuvres" meant active service. Whilst I cannot remember any of P.H. Pearse's actual words, I came away from Larkfield with the impression that we were to guard our tongues against any discussion of volunteer activities and be ready for any emergency.

APPENDIX - (Continued)

Ref. Page 18 Question 7.

Some years ago I read a book written by a man called Howe (or Hoey) who was secretary to Admiral Hall of the British Admiralty Intelligence Service. The title of the book is, I think, "Room 40, O.B.". The book deals with the activities during the 1914-1918 War, of the decoding and deciphering department which operated in Room No. 40, Old Building, Whitehall, and contains references to interception of communications between Germany and America concerning the Rising.

Ref. Page 19 Question 19 (d)

I believe, but cannot be certain, that Eamonn Ceannt made reference to the East Coast of Britain being subjected to heavy bombardment by the German Navy on Easter Monday. It was definitely referred to during Easter Week, and I remember subsequently checking back on old newspapers of that period to find that there was a certain amount of German naval attacks during that week.

Ref. Page 25 Question 1.

I can only remember seeing three types of rifles in use in the Nurses' Home. They were British Service Lee-Enfields (.303"), Martini-Enfields (.303") and Howth Mausers. I cannot remember how many of each type. Volunteer William McDowell (who was killed

APPENDIX - (Continued)

on Easter Monday) was originally armed with a .22" miniature rifle, which was issued to him on Good Friday night. Just after entering the South Dublin Union (before noon on Easter Monday), he was given a .303" rifle (a Lee-Enfield, I think) and ammunition by volunteer Denis O'Brien (a middle-aged man, as also was McDowell) who announced that he had been detailed for Red Cross work and would not be allowed to carry a rifle. McDowell handed over the .22 rifle to someone else - who, I cannot remember. There was at least one Volunteer in the party between the church and the main gate of the South Dublin Union who was armed with a shotgun. He was an oldish man, Gibson, I think, was his name, and he was enthusiastic on the merits of the shotgun for close quarter engagements.

Ref. Page 33 Question 1.

We had a visit from a clergyman (R.C.) in the Nurses' Home, who heard our confessions in a corner of the kitchen. I cannot remember noticing what order he belonged to. The light was poor at the time. It was early in the week, possibly Monday or Tuesday evening.

Ref. Page 24 Question 17.

It should be possible to obtain lists from the

APPENDIX - (Continued)

1916 garrisons' associations, of the men who took part in the Rising. If these are compared with the official lists of prisoners deported which were issued by the British, it will be possible to identify the occupation of each participant, as the British lists contained each prisoner's occupation. These British lists were published in a Handbook called "Sinn Fein Rebellion Handbook", by the "Irish Times", copies of which should still be obtainable.