

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 307

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 307.....

Witness

Mr. Thomas MacCarthy,
17 Iveagh Gardens,
Crumlin Road,
Dublin.

Identity

Member of I.R.B. Dublin 1911;
Captain 'C' Coy. 4th Battn. Dublin Bgde.
Easter Week 1916.

Subject

- (a) National activities 1911-1916;
- (b) Howth Gun-Running 1914;
- (c) Volunteer organising Co. Cork 1915;
- (d) Roe's Distillery, Dublin; Easter Week 1916.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil

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Form B.S.M. 2.

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STATEMENT BY THOMAS MacCARTHY

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17 Iveagh Gardens, Crumlin Road, Dublin.

A couple of years prior to the formation of the Volunteers I joined the I.R.B. I believe it was the Lord Edward Fitzgerald Circle. The Centre at the time was Paddy O'Loughlin's father, the old Pat O'Loughlin. We met at 41 Parnell Square. Joe McGrath, Frank Gaskins, my brother Dan MacCarthy and my brother Paddy MacCarthy were members of the same Circle. I came in close contact with Sean McDermott, Eamon Ceannt, Tom Clarke, Con Colbert, Liam Mellows and Barney Mellows. I knew Joe Flunkett, not extremely well but I knew him. I knew James Connolly; he frequented Countess Markievicz's house, Surrey House, Leinster Road.

I joined the Volunteers at the inception, at the inaugural meeting in the Rotunda on 25th November, 1913. Eoin MacNeill was there. Indirectly we all had orders to get in there and get positions.

In "C" Company of the Volunteers there was one man, Robert Page, a member of the I.R.B., who became a recruiting Sergeant in the British Army.

Afterwards when the Volunteers were established we drilled in 34 Lower Camden Street. These premises were quite incapable of accommodating us, and then we got premises at Larkfield, Kimmage, and we drilled there every Thursday night.

The Volunteer Headquarters gave instructions to carry out elections of officers. There was a man called Cassidy of Crumlin, manager of the brick-works, and O'Hanlon, a clerk in the brick-works, great friends of mine. I was

idle at the time, doing nothing, and I said I was going to win election. I went up to Larkfield one night to a meeting. I think Ted Sheehan was in the chair and he left before it was over, he had to go away, and a man called Whelan, an ex-British Army man with red hair, took the chair. The purpose of the meeting was to elect Company Officers, a Secretary, Treasurer, and so on. I was proposed by John Kelly, who seconded it I cannot now remember. Mr. Cassidy of Crumlin stood up and made a speech which more or less conveyed to the Company that it would be a grand thing to see a man of such a stature as Mr. Robert Page leading the Company. I do not think either John or Jim Kelly was a member of the I.R.B. at that time. There was a further proposition and a man called Willie Byrne was proposed, "Wilsie" he was called, but on a vote and I happened to get the largest amount of votes for the position, and in the course of elimination the last man dropped out and I went to the poll again. I still headed the poll and the next man went out. Then I went to the final with Robert Page and he went out. The result was that I was elected O.C. of "C" Company, 4th Battalion.

In the meantime Ted Sheehan had vacated the chair and the ex-British Army drill instructor got into the chair, by what means I do not know. It was quite out of order that he should be there. There were several proposals for 1st Lieutenant, and Bob Page was proposed, Garry Byrne was proposed again and William Byrne. In the meantime some people had left the hall. There was a check taken of the number of people present. I did not vote for myself at all, I do not know whether the rest did or not, presumably they did. There was a vote taken as between Page and the two Byrnes. Robert Page was elected, but the Chairman got into a state and asked did any extra people get into the hall. This was just an ordinary question, but by asking it

he created the impression in Page's mind that he was beaten again and he withdrew, not knowing he had been elected. Garry Byrne was elected 1st Lieutenant, and W. Byrne elected 2nd Lieutenant.

Nothing of importance happened after that until the Howth gun-running on 26th July, 1914. The 4th Battalion mobilised for that at Father Mathew Park. I think all the Battalions mobilised there; I think the whole Dublin Brigade were there. Our Company was the last going into Howth, I think, on account of the formation. We moved off for Howth, but we did not know what we were going to Howth for. I remember that Andy Fitzpatrick (deceased) who was an employee of the National Telephone Company at the time, put the whole telephone system to Howth out of action the previous night, with the result that when the whole Battalions of the Dublin Brigade got to Howth no advance information was given to the British authorities. As a matter of fact they were taken by surprise because the D.I. and the R.I.C. out there thought they would get into communication, but they could not because the telephone system was out of action.

When we got to Howth the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Battalions went down to where the yacht was, and the 4th Battalion held the entrance to the ordinary pier and nobody was allowed to pass. They were all armed from the yacht. When the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Battalions got their arms, the Companies of the 4th Battalion went down in their turn as well as I remember. As a matter of fact, at the start when the 1st and 2nd Battalions were getting on the pier, the R.I.C. went around to the fishing pier and came across in a boat, and they were covered by the Volunteers standing on the quayside where the yacht was and they said, "If you move out of that you are going to get an ounce of lead."

Unfortunately these men, the coastguards, went out of the harbour and sent up rockets to communicate with the other coastguards. I was not actually on the spot, but I know they got out of the harbour and they should never have been allowed to get out.

I have an interesting recollection of seeing Arthur Griffith marching up from the yacht with his Mauser rifle on his shoulder. I saw him throw away his walking stick and come outside the pier. I wished I could have got hold of the stick myself, but some old man - probably a resident of Howth - picked it up, I do not know who he was. It was interesting to see a man who had been more or less a pacifist, march the whole way with his rifle on his shoulder.

We started our march back to Dublin. We had rifles but no ammunition, because the ammunition was sent on in advance by Sean McDermott and Tom Clarke in taxis. On arrival in the vicinity of Howth Road coming towards the sea wall, we saw a row of Scottish Borderers in a kneeling position and a row standing with rifles at the ready. I do not know who the man was, but one individual from our crowd went up the steps of a house on the left of the Howth Road coming into Dublin, practically the last house with high steps, and fired a shot out of a revolver which might have been the cause of spreading terrible disaster. As a matter of fact he shot Private Finney of the King's Own Scottish Borderers and I remember seeing Finney hopping down to the sea wall. We thought that matters were going to get hot, but the men in charge did not lose their heads and there was no more firing.

I saw Commandant Eamon Ceannt and Captain Seamus Murphy moving around the road speaking to the members of the 3th Battalion. I approached Eamon Ceannt and asked him what were the orders and he told me to save the rifles. He was

"moseying" around from one fellow to another saying, "Get your rifles away. Get across the wall and get into Croydon Park". Every one of them got away; we got into that house and left the rifles there for the time being.

While we were going along Howth Road we saw a big house where there was a garden-party going on. I did not know the man there very well, but I knew him by repute. His name was Mr. Ray, and he lived in a private house on the Howth Road.

We got all the rifles into Croydon Park. I do not know where the Scottish Borderers went to; they moved off. The Liberty Hall people were deadly antagonistic to Colonel Moore. I do not know where he came from but he arrived there. Darrel Figgis was not with him, if he was I did not see him. Colonel Moore came along doing the big fellow and shouting, "How many men are here?" etc. The result was that we did not get half the rifles. That was at Croydon Park.

We got round to the back of the place called Puckstown. Ex-President Cosgrave's brother-in-law, Frank Flanagan, had a beautiful hunting horse which was more or less utilised all that day. The man who was riding the horse at the time was an ex-British Army man named McGonagle. This man was in full uniform with a Sam Browne belt. He was clearing away as he did not want any trouble, and he handed over the horse to somebody. The owner of the horse, Frank Flanagan, took over the animal and he was scouting the roads right, left and centre. I think the horse dropped dead some days afterwards.

We got a lot of taxis. Frank Fahy was there, Harry Nicholls was there and myself and Frank Fahy ran a lot of rifles up to "Bird" Flanagan's place in Walkinstown.

After we delivered them we went back to Puckstown. On our second journey across we saw the commotion at Bachelor's Walk where the Scottish Borderers were shooting the people, but we did not know what the commotion was about then. The weight of the rifles was bumping the springs of the taxi; it was a terrible job.

During the taking away of the rifles from Puckstown the gentleman called Ray, who had the private garden-party in front of his house, arrived with a motor-bicycle and sidecar and offered to help us. I always thought it was a very decent turn because he was not connected with us at all. The motor-bicycle and sidecar was at our service. He rode the motor-bicycle and he was not able to take more than 5 or 6 rifles at a time with a man sitting in it, but no matter where they were to be brought he was willing to take them.

As far as I recollect Harry Nicholls came with me on another run and we took them to the Hibernian Hall in Rathmines. He would verify that. I was out until twelve or one o'clock that morning. Harry Nicholls and myself went as far as Swords to see if we could pick up any more arms. We went back to the Hibernian Hall in Rathmines to get a rifle each, but we were refused at first. Some of the people held on to them, but we did not leave until we got a rifle each. Harry Nicholls came as far as Dolphin's Barn with me and I got in some time in the small hours of the morning, but I had my rifle and he had his rifle.

A fortnight after 26th July, 1914, I happened to drop in to the Irish Freedom office, D'Olier Street, and was accosted by Sean MacDermott who said to me, "You're the very man I am looking for". I was told to proceed to Howth and get in touch with McConkey on the ordinary pier where the Yacht Club was, which I did and he understood.

what I was after. He said to me, "Come around to the fishing pier", and I told him to proceed in front as I did not want to create any suspicions as to my presence there. My job was to hire a fishing boat for a party going fishing. The owner of the boat asked me if they would require the nets. I asked him how long it would take to get them out and he said a few minutes, so I told him to leave them in the boat. The next remark from the boatman was as follows: "By G--, I'll get my rifle to-night". Mark you, not a word about what the boat was going to be used for was mentioned. He then said, "A fortnight ago when the guns were being landed here, I would not be allowed down the pier because I hadn't my Volunteer Membership Card on me, but I have it tonight", etc. Now my work being done I was awaiting a tram. Just after parting with McConkey, who had not gone a hundred yards when a jarvey driving by said to him, "Hullo Johnny, it's a fine day". McConkey replied "Yes, it is". The jarvey then said to him "Do you see that fellow standing over there waiting for a tram?" and he just replied "Yes". "Well," said the jarvey, "that's the Volunteer who was O.C. at the entrance to the pier the Sunday of the Howth gun-running".

My orders from H.Q. were to go to the residence of Dr. Boyd Barrett, Fitzwilliam Street on Saturday evening, I think at 6 p.m. "Limerick" was the password. So I rang the bell, the door opened, "Limerick". "Come in, Mr. MacCarthy". Having been ushered into the house I was asked if I would like a cup of tea, which I gladly accepted. About half an hour later the doctor got on the 'phone to a Dr. Barry and asked him to bring over the car. The three of us got into the car and proceeded to St. Enda's, via Templeogue and Butterfield Lane into Rathfarnham, so as to avoid having to pass police barracks on main road. We arrived at St. Enda's where there were about 24 other

motors awaiting the arrival of the guns which were being landed at Kilcool by the boat I hired at Howth a few days earlier.

A charabanc full of the boys, left Dublin earlier on that Saturday, about midday, for Kilcool, as did also a large number of cyclists who scouted the roads all the way from Dublin to Kilcool. The charabanc was being loaded with the guns and ammunition, and when the job was completed the charabanc was to have come to St. Enda's, where there were enough cars to take possession of a supply of guns, etc., each car going to dumps which were already arranged. As soon as the charabanc started, the back axle broke and therefore could not move, and the party had to commandeer a terrace of houses outside Little Bray, where they stored the rifles and ammunition until a dispatch rider, in the person of Liam Mellows, arrived at St. Enda's at about 3.30 a.m. with the news of the breakdown of the charabanc outside Little Bray, so the order was "All cars out". In less than a few minutes they were gone, doing over thirty miles per hour across Ticknock. When they arrived at Little Bray each car took a supply of rifles to dumps which were already arranged for reception of same. The whole consignment was saved and the guns, etc., were handled by the right people.

While waiting at St. Enda's from 6.30 or 7 p.m. until 3.30 a.m. for the arrival of the charabanc, there was a round table conference, the composition of which was as follows:- Pádraig Pearse, Liam Pearse, barristers, solicitors, carpenters, doctors, labourers, unemployed, etc., etc., discussing revolution.

At the time of the split in the Volunteers the trouble started down at Woodenbridge. We had a powerful meeting at Larkfield to decide about the split. I, being the

Company Officer, put the question to the troops on parade and said to them, "Any man who wants to stand on the side of Ireland and Eoin MacNeill will stand fast, and any man who wants to go with Redmond and the British Empire will step forward." Out of a Company of approximately 120 only four men stepped out. The names of the four people who stepped out were Robert Page, a young lad about 18 years of age named Butterly, and two Fitzgibbons, two tall men who lived near Brookfield Road. These were the four men who stepped out. On that particular night, to prove the solidarity of our Company, we started to march to Headquarters, which was at 44 Kildare Street. Having left Larkfield in glory with our flag flying we encountered on our way some of the four gentlemen who had stepped out of the Company. I was approached by one man out of the ranks, a plumber, who had what I would call a plumber's ebonite article for dressing sheet lead, and he wanted to get a belt at Page. I had a job to prevent them from killing Page that night. I told them they could not break ranks.

I should mention that the split having been carried out, I said that there was only one thing for the four people who had left the Company to do, and that was to go and join the British Army. Young Butterly joined the British Army and he was killed a few months afterwards. Page joined the British Army and became a recruiting sergeant for them. In the Dublin papers the following advertisement appeared - "If you want to join the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve or the Dublin Fusiliers, apply to Lieutenant Redmond Howard and Sergeant Robert Page, No. 34 Chambers, Trinity College." My prediction came true as regards only one thing being left for these men to do.

We marched to Kildare Street and we were addressed there by some of the men who congratulated us on our turnout. At Kildare Street there was a shot fired, but I do

not know where it came from and I think there was nothing in it. We duly returned to Headquarters and dismissed.

The split did not involve any change in the officer personnel of my Company.

Throughout 1914 and 1915 there was nothing but drilling except that Major General Friend, the O.C. of the British troops in Ireland, issued an order under the Defence of the Realm Act ordering Liam Mellows, Ernest Blythe and Herbert Pim to quit Ireland within 24 or 48 hours. Again through being one of the idle rich I happened to be at Volunteer Headquarters in ~~the~~² Dawson Street when the three of them came in from camping somewhere and they were certainly looking very decrepit, bearded and so on. Roger Casement was there that evening and that was the only time I ever had the pleasure of being in his company.

A little while afterwards, I should say about a fortnight or three weeks afterwards, Pádraig Pearse came up to the 4th Battalion and asked for some Volunteers to go out on the road and take up the work of Mellows, Blythe and Pim. He selected "C" Company, why I do not know but probably because it was really the largest in the Battalion. I was doing nothing as usual and my brother Dan was not working. He apparently had more sense than I had because he made enquiries with regard to what they were paying a man to organise, but I said to him, "I'll clear, I'll be one less in the house". I took on the job of going to be a Volunteer organiser for Cork.

I left the following Monday morning on the 9.15 train and arrived at 2.30 in Cork. I was met by Tomás MacCurtain and Terry MacSwiney; I knew them well. They took me to the Hotel Provincial on Morrisson's Island, where my headquarters were. I took charge of the whole Cork Brigade for

that particular week, teaching them extended order drill, scaling walls, which was quite a new thing in those days, etc. They seemed to like it very well down there. I remained in Cork city for that particular week. I stayed on because on the following Saturday night Pádraig Pearse was coming down to address the Volunteers from the Sheares Street Volunteer Hall.

On the night of the meeting that Pearse was to address, the whole Cork Brigade were mobilised under the commandancy of Tom MacCurtain and Vice-Commandant Sean O'Sullivan. The wives, sons and daughters of ex-British Army men were there in their hundreds and it was a very disreputable crowd that was there that night. Actually bottles were flung at the window from which Pearse was speaking. I could not understand for a moment why the O.C. of the Brigade did not immediately take action, and having been talking to Captain Cotter I said to him - I was in the midst of a crowd of women - "If this is going to go any further I'll pull my gun". I only had a .25 automatic, and the people around me scattered. Immediately Vice-Commandant Sean O'Sullivan gave the order to the Cork Brigade to fix bayonets and there was a charge and there was no respect shown to anybody because they walked on them.

The following week I moved on to Mallow. I was escorted as far as Mourne Abbey by Terry MacSwiney and Tomás MacCurtain. I was in Mallow as headquarters for two or three weeks and I formed a corps of Volunteers at Mallow. I moved from Mallow to Kanturk and formed another corps of Volunteers there, which was the best of the lot in my opinion.

During my stay in Mallow I met two locals named Maurice O'Coñnor and George Hanniffer who were good men in the Volunteers there. On one occasion I happened to be in

Mourne Abbey drilling the Company there - some of the lads there were executed in Cork jail later - and on my way back coming through Mallow I was called into the shop of Maurice O'Connor. I was in full uniform. O'Connor said to me, "I want to introduce you to a man". The man was wearing khaki. "What's the big idea?" I asked. "I want to get him away", said he. I stepped out then and went up to my digs in Hannifer's house and changed into mufti. I came back to the shop, went upstairs, got a safety razor and shaved off the man's moustache. His name was Kepple, whose people were fabulously wealthy in Mallow. From information received they owned half Blackrock in County Dublin as well. Hannifer gave him shoes, Maurice O'Connor gave him clothing and I gave him collars and ties, and we disguised him. He was well known in Mallow. His parents were living only a few doors away. He was in the Munster Fusiliers, and hired a bicycle in Buttevant and rode into Mallow. That night the boys tied up his uniform, etc., went up to the Blackwater and threw them into the river with a rock attached to them. It could be assumed that he was drowned. The job now was to get him away. Who was to buy his ticket at the railway station, because in those days I was followed everywhere by the R.I.C. and every word I spoke at meetings, etc., was taken down. Somebody tied an addressed label on his bicycle. He had very definite instructions not to ride up to Mallow station until about three minutes to half-past eleven. The night mail left then. The station was always packed with travellers' skips and he had instructions to rush in and fling his bicycle between them. I had approached the railway station and when I looked at the booking-office I saw an ex-R.I.C. man giving out tickets so I could not go near it. There was a policeman at the far side of the platform looking at me. I had to move and went across the gangway bridge to the departure side and

stayed there until I saw my man arriving. I moved then to meet him half way across the footbridge and I said to him, "Get out and buy your ticket at Ballybrophy or Maryborough. Tell them the train was moving off when you arrived and that you had to get in without your ticket." He sat down in the railway carriage about a minute before the train got out and a fellow in full khaki got in and sat beside him. Kepple succeeded in getting to Dublin. He had a letter inside his boot which I gave to him to get to North Great George's Street in Dublin where Marie Perolz lived. He got away to America afterwards, I do not know how he got away. The clergyman in charge of the Munsters at the time was Father Gleeson, and Kepple's mother asked him to look after Willie but Father Gleeson never saw Willie in the battlefield, and I never had a line, postcard or otherwise, from him and I think neither had the lads in Mallow.

I kept moving around County Cork - Kanturk, Doneraile, Buttevant, Boherbwee, Kishkeam, Glountane and Castletownroche. During the time I was in Kanturk I received a letter from the Rev. Father Wall of Drumcollogher. I do not know how he knew I was there. He asked me to come down to Drumcollogher to give him a hand as he was going to start a corps of Volunteers in Tulleyleix and Broadford. I left Kanturk in the company of an old friend of mine, Dan O'Leary, a great athlete who lives in Blackrock, Dublin, now. He was of great assistance to me at the time. We arrived at Drumcollogher, met his reverence, and that night we started two very successful companies of Volunteers in Broadford and Tulleyleix. On the march out to these places the men were all armed with Lee Enfield rifles. At that time they were much better armed than our lads in Dublin were. I sang a few songs, marching along with Father Wall at the head of the men. Father Wall asked me would I come over to him the following morning as he wanted to make a few

records. I went over and I never had the experience before in my life. I was singing into a long horn. He had a phonograph. He took off the reproducer and fixed it to make records and I sang, "The Gallant Men of '98", and "Oh, for a Steed". He afterwards got a goose's feather, cleaned off the cylinders and put them on and let your humble servant hear his voice for the first time in his life. It was an extraordinary experience for me. Father Wall had a duplicator, and as he put on the records he wrote out the words and set them to tonic solfa, produced about fifty copies of each for me to bring back to Kanturk and distributed the others amongst his own crowd in Drumcollogher.

I arrived back in Dublin some time in 1915, I do not know the month. After I came back nothing of much interest happened until 1916.

There was a lad, John Brophy, a member of my Company who was then employed in the British post office as a telegraph messenger. He was a very quiet unassuming boy, not more than 18 years of age, but he certainly was a genius from the point of view of arming our Company. On one particular occasion there was a recruiting meeting held in the Mansion House and it was to be attended by Major O'Hara of the British Army and a Lieutenant Colonel whose name I cannot remember. They were from Wellington Barracks, now Griffith Barracks. Young Brophy knew the recruiting meeting was on in the Mansion House and he wrote out a faked telegram, put it in an envelope and addressed it to Major O'Hara. He proceeded to Wellington Barracks and came out with a Lee-Enfield rifle from the barracks. As a matter of fact he never went into the barracks but he came out with a rifle. He was the greatest character I ever met in my life. He was caught afterwards for much less than taking out rifles. He had carried on getting rifles

very successfully for a considerable period. We paid some money for some of the stuff we would get, but a good deal of it we did not pay anything for. He would get the rifles from soldiers and would give them a few pounds, maybe one soldier would get £5 and the next would get £2 and so on. One member of our Company got to know about this lad's good work and he started buying some rifles from them and charging more for them to his own Company. The man I am referring to who did that was in McCabe's yard the morning of the mobilisation in 1916, his name was Patrick Dalton. The Brophy boy had done so much work of that kind that I began to think it was time to call a halt. He was a great character. He said to me, "Do you want a sword?" and I said, "I think you had better draw the line", and I made him draw the line. In his official capacity as telegraph messenger, as you can understand, he could go into any building, whether the telegrams were faked or otherwise. He went into Trinity College and drew an elaborate sketch of the O.T.C. quarters, near Wentworth Place, took every detail of ingress and egress and submitted it to me as his Company officer. We studied it and were thinking of taking action but then we said we would have to consult the Vice-Commandant. We consulted Commandant Eamon Ceannt and Vice-Commandant Cathal Brugha, who gave it very minute consideration and decided that it was not feasible to raid the place for arms of the O.T.C. as the exits and means of escape were not what you would call up to the mark. They were counting the cost of life and so on. It was a very awkward place to get at. On one of his visits to Wellington Barracks with a faked telegram, Brophy took out a pair of binoculars belonging to Major O'Hara and one belonging to the Lieutenant-Colonel whose name I cannot remember. Both pairs of binoculars were used during the Rebellion.

The Captain of each Company of the 4th Battalion was invited out to afternoon tea at Old Bawn. Cathal Brugha, Willie Pearse and Eamon Ceannt were there. That was on a Sunday, a fortnight before the Rebellion, and it was there that each man who had to take charge of the different places got his orders as to where he was going. We were called into a separate room where we were given our orders and told what buildings we were to take possession of. We were asked questions about whether we knew them and so on. As far as I can remember I was not asked or told anything of military use. I got instructions that I was to occupy Roe's Distillery, Mount Brown, but I was not told what military advantage was to be gained by occupying it - just to take the building and hold it - and, with great respect to the dead, I could not see the military advantage at all.

With regard to arrangements for the Rebellion, on the Good Friday we took a list of where the men worked, what their business was, and so on. There was a man in my Company called Blinco employed in Waytes Brothers, Lemon Street, off Grafton Street. I was asked could I get motor-bikes with sidecars and I said I could. I asked Joseph Egan if he was game and he said he was, although he was not connected. Joe Egan had a motor-bike and sidecar. James Styles, the cycle shop in Ellis' Quay, had a motor-bike with sidecar. I went to Waytes Brothers in Lemon Street and I called Blinco out. I was accompanied there by my brother, Dan MacCarthy. I told Blinco either to 'phone or send a wire back to his job saying that he would not be able to go back as he had got news of some of his relations being ill. I took him with me up to Styles' shop in Ellis' Quay where we took out the motor-bike and sidecar and conveyed my brother in Styles' sidecar. Joe Egan's motor-bike was put into use by taking Liam Mellows, dressed in clerical garb, in the sidecar to Athenry, County

Galway. Joe Egan at the time had no knowledge of who the reverend clergyman in the sidecar was. The escort following Joe Egan and the "clergyman" was Blinco, with my brother ^{Don and Leah} in the sidecar. It turned out a terrible day with awful rain. The escort had to watch the road for the marks of the tyres of the other motor-bike so that they would not make a mistake and take the wrong road. They arrived at what my brother described as a fork in the road, Joe Egan and his passenger went one road and the escort took the other road. The escort went a certain distance and when they discovered they could not trace the tyres of the front motor-bike and sidecar, in which the "clergyman" was travelling, they turned back and came on to the other road.

In the meantime a slight accident had happened to the lamp bracket on Joe Egan's motor-bike and they were trying to do something with it when they heard their escort coming along, and there and then the "clergyman" said, "By ---, here they are". This was the first time that Joe Egan knew who the "clergyman" was.

However, all being well, they duly arrived at Athenry, where they got a great reception from the people. Mellows did not go around openly, but any house he knocked at received him well. My brother and Blinco got back on Saturday night and I think Joe Egan got back on Saturday night too.

Nothing extraordinary happened on Easter Saturday.

On Easter Sunday we were all called to Ceannt's house. We were told to stand-to after the countermanding order appeared in the "Sunday Independent".

On Easter Monday morning we received our mobilisation orders to parade at about eleven o'clock at Emerald Square, Cork Street. The 4th Battalion were mobilised there. We paraded at Emerald Square as ordered. Nearly opposite was a yard attached to a house - McCabe's place - and Joe McGrath was there in charge of any amount of arms, and supplied the men with stuff. Lieutenant Seamus Kenny of "B" Company was left in charge there after we moved off. At that particular place Dalton was there and when he saw the troops moving off he said to Lieutenant Kenny, "I want to go away to change my clothes". He was in uniform at the time. He did not go home but went to a house in Donore Avenue. He must have gone home afterwards because he changed his clothes. I knew nothing about him, and we had not any means of getting information from outside sources. Intelligence departments were lacking at that time. Dalton went off and when we took over our positions in Roe's Distillery, Mount Brown, some time on Monday evening I looked out the window and saw Dalton parading at the far side of the street in an immaculate navy suit.

We occupied Roe's Distillery from Monday morning. We did not anticipate any hindrance in our ingress into the building. There was a malster employed there called Boyd. We did not get in by the front gate, it was shut, so we had to go down Cromwell's Quarters, James's Street, at the double to get in by the back gate. Whether this man Boyd scented something or not I do not know. The gate was half ajar and Boyd pulled the bolt across the gate stopping our entrance into the building. I then gave orders to my Company to get their trench tools, and we had to bash in the gate. During all this delay we were being exposed to the tower of the Old Men's Home, and they had a commanding view from which we were directly under fire in our present

position. We had to smash the gate in and also some of our lads scaled the wall, which was covered with glass, and got in and opened the gate. I went up afterwards and demanded every key of the place from Boyd. He was a bit hesitant at first, but I said, "If you don't deliver the keys I'll have to take them off your corpse". He delivered up the keys then. During the time we were trying to knock down the gate we were practically attacked by the rabble in Bow Lane, and I will never forget it as long as I live. "Leave down your ---- rifles," they shouted, "and we'll beat the ---- out of you." They were most menacing to our lads.

Having got in we tried to consolidate our position as well as we could by barricading the windows with sacks of corn; put certain men in the building at Cromwell's Quarters and the rest at other parts of the building. The Union was not exactly opposite us, it was at an angle, and we had no view from where we were. We could not see what was going on; and we had no means of finding out. After consultation with my 1st Lieutenant and 2nd Lieutenant, Egan and O'Grady, we decided that we would evacuate the place some time on Tuesday night, as in our judgment continued occupation of this post would have served no useful military purpose, and we had no food. I would say if I were put in the same position again I would adopt the same attitude again.

We occupied the building from Easter Monday morning until Tuesday night. It was a very high building, three or four storeys high. We had 22 men there altogether. Two men cleared out of it, without orders from me or my officers. During our occupation of it I saw only one British Red Cross man in Bow Lane. I never saw an armed soldier during our stay there.

After withdrawing it was a case of every man for himself. Some of them succeeded in getting into other posts.

After our withdrawal from this post there was no reaction except that I was a much maligned man, but I still say that under similar circumstances I would adopt the same attitude, and I have never yet apologized for our action.

During our occupancy of that building we posted two of our men in the side building that goes down Cromwell's quarters. From a military point of view we wanted to see that, in the event of being driven out or going out, we would have a means of getting out, and we pulled the bars out of the windows of the private house where the malster lived. How the two men got to know about this exit I do not know, but I am very definite in my opinion that there were no instructions issued to these men to go out. My last recollection is going over there with Lieutenant Egan to examine the position and finding their rifles, haversacks and ammunition there. Those two men had no instructions to leave.

We did everything humanly possible to get into communication with the Union opposite to us. I actually sent out Martin Keogh, Larry Sinnott and Frank Murphy. I think Gogan went out too. I remember putting a pair of chamois gloves on one of them to make him look a la respectable. They went and hammered at the Union gate and they never got a reply. We were trying to get across there. We learned afterwards that there was a lorry or a float against the gate of the Union, loaded with granite blocks. We had no instructions to report to the Union. As a matter of fact I had no instructions where we should evacuate to, or even instructions to keep in communication with the Union. We tried to, but we could not. A fly

could not get in to them never mind us, they were so well barricaded. Other people seemed to think we could have got in there, but I know from inside information that we could not have got in.

There was a suggestion that I would be courtmartialled by the Volunteers, of which I was naturally resentful. This was a very considerable time afterwards and a lot of new men had joined up. I said, "I'm ---- if I'm going to be courtmartialled by these new men. If I am going to be courtmartialled I'll be courtmartialled by the I.R.B." A very considerable time elapsed again and I was requisitioned for courtmartial by the I.R.B. This took place in Weavers Hall, Donore Avenue. Pat O'Loughlin, the Centre, was there, Joe McGrath and Frank Gaskins were there. The two men who had cleared out of the building without orders were also up for courtmartial that night on the basis of my statement. I was asked did I destroy the rifles and I said, "No, not all. We threw some of them into the kiln fires. Not the lot of them". They said it was a serious breach of discipline not to destroy them, which I accepted. I was asked a few questions.

I waited some time to see if I could get any results. More than a year elapsed, and I said to Joe McGrath, who was Centre, "What was the result of the courtmartial?" He said, "Did I not tell you?" "No", I said, "I never heard a word about it". "You were to be called upon to resign", said he, and from that day to this I have never been asked to resign. It was never carried out as far as I was concerned.

Some time after the courtmartial I met Pat O'Loughlin, the I.R.B. Centre, in the ordinary course having a drink in a public-house. I just met him accidentally, and he said

to me, "I am very sorry but I voted against you at the courtmartial. There is a big difference in being called upon to resign and being put out." My interpretation of that was, "It is only a matter of time and you can be back again", and I made up my mind that I would never go back again. Why should I go back again after they decided on calling on me to resign and retaining in the I.R.B. the two men who had evacuated Roe's Distillery without instructions from any officer. They were retained in the organisation of the I.R.B. From that time onwards I made up my mind that I would not allow my sons or daughters to be members of any military organisation, not even the Boy Scouts or the Girl Guides.

I might point out that on the organisation of the Volunteers I was asked by Cathal Brugha to go back to the Command I held. I refused to do so.

The night that Phil Cosgrave, Countess Markievicz and Joe McGrath were arrested long before the Rebellion - I do not remember the date - my brother Dan came into the house. My mother had gone to bed, and there was a friend of the family staying with us. There was a box on the window of the kitchen containing a lot of old trash and amongst the trash was an envelope with about half a dozen photographs, "While-You-Waits". There was one of Dan in a straw hat. The British officers and military came along to the house while Dan was in it. They were out in the yard belonging to Moggy Keogh and they could see everything through our kitchen window because the blind on the window was not pulled down. Dan did not know that and he crawled out into the garden and came along in alignment with where the troops were. He was getting into the field to get to Joe McGrath's place in Donore Avenue. He started to move across but fell over some tin cans and all the dogs in the

place started barking and he had to get back quickly. He got up to a wall at the back of our garden and stood very close to it. He had no overcoat- vest or waistcoat on him. He could hear the military searching through the garden; they came down the field in a line with where he was standing, and an armoured car was circling around Donore Avenue, Cork Street and Dolphins Barn, and the lights were within six feet of him. They put me through a terrible cross-examination that night. They searched the place and came across his stuff, he was in the Corporation at the time. They were pulling everything around and one of them examined the box containing the photographs. I did not know what was in the box. He took the photographs out of the box and said, "Who is that?" pointing to Dan's photograph. I said, "That is my brother Paddy and he is dead over 13 months. He never lived to see them, and that accounts for the good state of preservation they are in". The officer put them back into the box, and a few moments afterwards a Corporal came in to say that a fellow had escaped into the back garden. The officer said, "Why the hell didn't you fire? What do you think you are with me for? When I get back to barracks I'll put you in the guardroom". A few minutes later the officer called him back and said, "Could you describe that man?" The other had been outside looking in the window, and he said, "Yes, sir. He was standing at the window, dressed in navyblue and reading a paper". He gave a very vivid description. The officer then said, "There is no doubt about it, somebody has left the house". "There is no doubt about it", I said, "nobody has left this house, and if your soldier has come in here to tell me there was somebody out in our garden, he was there in the capacity of a thief, and it is not the first time thieves were there". I got into a dramatic mood then and said, "My God, fancy a man coming into this house and telling me he saw my dead brother walking around the back garden". My brother Paddy was dead, but

the photograph was of Dan. The officer then said, "I am taking some of these photographs with me." "You can take the lot of them if you want them," I told him. He took one or two and left the rest.

I said to the soldiers, "Are you Black and Tans?" "No, we are soldiers," I was told. I said, "As soldiers I suppose you would not object to having a drink". I duly administered the drinks, and when the drinks were given out the D.M.P. man arrived from the parlour in company with the officer. He proceeded to lift one of the empty glasses out of which one of the soldiers had drunk and smelt it. "That is good stuff", he said. "It is, by ---, but you are getting none of it", said I. With that observation the soldiers clicked their heels, and I said to them, "Whatever respect I have for soldiers, I loathe these people". They left the house, and on their way out I called the officer back and said, "Could I have a word with you?". "You can, out here", said he. I said, "I was going to ask you to have a drink". "No, thanks", he said. He duly proceeded on his way out. I said, "You see that lock on the door and the panels are broken. I am going to get a hammer and nails and try and secure the door for the night. I must get to bed because I have to get up for work in the morning. The reason I am drawing your attention to it is that I don't want your soldiers taking a shot at me when they hear me using the hammer".

My mother had been tumbled out of bed and got weak and I made a glass of punch for her. I lay down on the bed but I could not sleep.

Next morning I got up and went out to have a wash in the yard, to throw cold water on my face. On looking round I saw my brother, Dan, walking in from where he had been standing at the end of the wall all night. My mother

had said to me shortly after the soldiers left the night before, to go out to the back and see if he was still there, but I said to her, "If I open that back door I'll be shot". My brother was shaking with cold after standing out at the wall all night. I made him a tumbler of punch and he went up to bed and slept soundly. He went away that day over to Flemings in Gardiner's Row. I do not know where he went to afterwards.

Comdr. MacCarthy
SIGNED Thomas MacCarthy
DATE 18th Oct 1949

WITNESS Mrs. Jerry Comdt.

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