

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRE MILITAIR 1913-21

No. W.S. 708

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 308.....

Witness

Mr. Seamus Murray,
50 John Dillon Street,
Dublin.
Identity

Member of 'A' Company 3rd Battalion
Dublin Brigade I.V's. 1915 -

Employee on Q.M. G's. staff 1919-1921.

Subject

Boland's Bakery and railway workshops
Easter Week 1916;

His imprisonment and release 1916.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil

File No. ...S. 708.....

Form B.S.M. 2.

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STATEMENT BY SEUMAS MURRAY,

John Dillon Street, Dublin.

When I was a very young boy I met with an accident - my hip was badly smashed. I spent many months in hospital and went under several operations, and for a while there was a danger that my leg would have to be amputated. As a result ever since I have a bad limp.

I was present at the meeting in the Rotunda for the inauguration of the Volunteers and later I went to Camden Row, but on account of my infirmity I was very politely refused membership. I was very anxious to become a member and persisted in my efforts to join. Eventually my efforts were rewarded and early in 1915 I was allowed to join the 3rd Battalion. As I was the owner of a horse and car I was attached to the Transport Section of the Battalion, and paraded almost weekly at Camden Row.

On Holy Saturday, 1916, when I had finished work, J.H. Doyle (deceased) of "C" Company, 3rd Battalion, called at my house at 24 Michael's Lane, and told me to get my horse and cart and to report at Michael's & John's School, Essex Street, as quickly as possible, and that he would be waiting for me there. When I arrived at the school there was a party waiting for me, and then we proceeded to load the cart with a number of cases which contained rifles and boxes of ammunition.

The following were present :- Ted Sheehan, Simon Donnelly, Seán Goulding, Sam Irwin, J.H. Doyle. When loaded, Simon Donnelly told me to proceed to Gerald Crofts' house in Camden Street. Simon Donnelly, Sam Irwin, Seán Goulding and J.H. Doyle came along on the footpath as an escort. We left some of the stuff at Gerald Crofts' house and then proceeded to Seán Goulding's house, Vincent Street, S.C.R., and left some more stuff there. From there we went on to a book shop in Baggot Street where we left the remainder of the stuff. When the job was completed Simon Donnelly gave me instructions to report with my horse and cart at the corner of Montague Street and Camden Street between the hours of 2 and 3 on Easter Sunday.

On Easter Sunday morning I read MacNeill's Countermanding Order in the 'Sunday Independent', and, believing that all manoeuvres, etc. were cancelled, I did not report at Camden Street that day, nor did I receive any further instructions.

On Easter Monday morning at about 11.30, Micheál Tannam called at my house and told me to report immediately with my horse and cart outside Lamberts veterinary establishment, Lennox Street. When I arrived at Lennox Street there was no one there. I decided to remain for a while. After some time the Battalion Quartermaster, James Byrne, came along. He made enquiries about some men of the Transport Section and he sent my younger brother, who had accompanied me, to Camden Row on a message. When my brother had left Byrne told me to report to the Commandant and to tell the Commandant that he was afraid to face him with the small

amount of transport he had at his disposal. Just then Micheál Tannam arrived and told me to report at the rere of Byrne's, fishmongers, in South Richmond Street.

I went there and loaded up all the military stores that were there. When the loading was completed we proceeded to Boland's Bakery. Tannam accompanied me on a bicycle.

When passing through Upper Fitzwilliam Street we heard the sound of rifle firing. Tannam turned to me and said, "the scrap is on". I was never informed that the rising was to take place, but from the distribution of the munitions on Saturday and the intense activity which prevailed in volunteer circles, I had a feeling that the 'day' for which we had been waiting was near at hand.

We entered the Bakery by the Clarence Street entrance and the place was already occupied by the Volunteers. The Volunteers were engaged in putting the place in a state of defence and they helped to unload the arms and ammunition. I then unloaded the horse and put him in a stall. I picked up a Lee Enfield rifle. I was not in uniform. I was then detailed to dig a trench on the railway line. When the trench was dug I proceeded along the line to Westland Row Station and took up a position on the bridge. I remained at Westland Row Station all day with little Joe O'Connor on sentry duty.

Late that evening I went back to the Bakery. I spent the night going from post to post, and on Tuesday assisted at the making of loopholes in the boundary wall of Boland's paddock commanding Grand Canal Street Bridge and Clanwilliam Place. I also assisted at the making of holes at the rere wall of Boland's Bakery in order to give us easy

access to the railway. On Tuesday night I spent some hours on duty with Simon Donnelly in Boland's paddock which commanded the bridge and Glanwilliam Place, but nothing unusual took place.

On Wednesday I took up a position on the railway workshops. We remained there until Sunday morning when Captain Joe O'Connor told us to evacuate and proceed to Boland's Bakery. We were lined up in the Bakery and the Commandant told us that it had been decided to surrender. This announcement met with general disapproval. Some of the men proceeded to smash their rifles. We were formed into fours and marched out through Clarence Street entrance into Grand Canal Street and into Grattan Street where we were halted, and laid down our arms in Grattan Street outside Smyley House.

The British soldiers who were in Lower Mount Street, came along and took the surrender from the Commandant. We were then marched up to Lower Mount Street where the British put a double line of soldiers on each side of us and marched us to the R.D.S. Grounds, Ballsbridge. We were put into cattle stalls, about twenty of us in each stall. The British officer in charge was very decent. We remained in Ballsbridge until Tuesday when we were marched to Richmond Barracks. Before being marched off we were paraded in the Grounds and the British officer in charge addressed the prisoners and said, "if any attempt at rescue by any of your friends from any of the side streets takes place, that 150 rebels would lie dead on the road".

On arrival at Richmond Barracks we were sent to various barrack rooms, and remained there until Friday.

Whilst there, 'G' men and R.I.C. men scrutinised us several times. Following the scrutiny by the police and R.I.C., one of the men in our room, Maurice Brennan, was taken away from us and brought to another part of the Barracks.

On Friday we were assembled on the Barrack Square. The day was very very wet. We got a ration of bully beef and biscuits and were kept for several hours standing in the Barrack Square. We were then marched to the North Wall and put on board a cattle boat.

On arrival in England we were sent to Wakefield Jail and put in separate cells. We were kept in solitary confinement and all our personal belongings were taken from us. We were not given convict clothes but each man had to wear a convict tab indicating his wing number and cell number. After a while we were allowed two hours' exercise in the ring. We were not allowed to smoke or to converse with our fellow prisoners. After some time the regulations in the prison were relaxed and we were allowed to associate with each other. We were then served with deportation orders and transferred to Frongoch. I was sent to the North Camp.

After a short time I was sent to Wormwood Scrubbs Prison to appear before the Sankey Commission. Before going before the Commission we were advised by Counsel as to the attitude to adopt. One of the members of the Commission informed me that my brother had been killed in France about 9th July. That was the first intimation I got of my brother's death. I was then questioned as to my membership of the Irish Volunteers. I told the Commission that I was not answering any questions. Next day I was returned to

Frongoch. I was released about the end of August, 1916.

SIGNED Jenna Murray
DATE 14/10/49.

WITNESS Sein Brennan. bondt.

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