

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURÓ STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 344

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 344.....

**Witness**

Mr. John Broderick,  
Athenry,  
Co. Galway.

**Identity**

Brigade Quartermaster, Irish Volunteers,  
Galway, Easter Week, 1916.

Brigade Quartermaster, 1918 - Truce.

Ex-T.D.

**Subject**

- (a) National activities 1914-1917;
- (b) Mobilisation and activities of  
Irish Volunteers, Athenry,  
Easter Week 1916.

**Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness**

Nil

File No. S.101.....

Form B.S.M. 2.

**ORIGINAL**STATEMENT BY JOHN BRODERICK,Athenry, Co. Galway.

I was present at the meeting held in Athenry early in 1914 at which the Volunteers were started. About seventy men joined. My father, the late Mr. John Broderick (Building Contractor), was elected President. Mr. Thomas Cleary (Building Contractor), was elected Vice-President. We held two parades each week, and we were drilled by reserve N. C. Os. of the British Army. Shortly after the formation of the Company, elections for Company Officers were held. The late Larry Lardiner was elected Captain. Frank Hynes was elected Vice-Captain. I was elected Lieutenant.

A parade of Volunteers was held at Athenry on 29 June, 1914. The salute was taken by the late Colonel Maurice Moore. It was a splendid parade, almost 2,000 Volunteers taking part.

Following the outbreak of the first World War, the British Army Reserve N. C. Os. who were training us, were called up, but by that time we had gained sufficient knowledge to be able to continue the training ourselves. In fact, members of the Athenry Company assisted at the training of Companies in the surrounding parishes. At the split the Athenry Company stood firm behind McNeill.

Early in 1915, Liam Mellows was appointed Chief Organiser for Galway. He stayed at my father's house in Athenry. Immediately after his arrival he organised Galway into a Brigade of four Battalions. Larry Lardner was appointed Brigade O/C.; Eamon Corbett was appointed Brigade Vice O/C. and Matty Niland, Brigade Adjutant. The following Companies were formed into the 1st Battalion (also known as the Athenry Battalion) - Athenry, Cusson, Rockfield, Craughwell, Kilconieron, Kiltulla and Killimordaly. Gilbert Morrissy was appointed Battalion O/c.; Ned Burke, Battalion Vice O/C. I was appointed Battalion Quartermaster.

At a parade held in Galway City on St. Patrick's Day, 1916, we received a very rough reception from the wives and dependents of British soldiers. Shortly after this parade Liam Mellows was served with a deportation order in my father's house. He was given seven days in which to comply with the order. He refused to comply and was arrested on the expiration of the notice. I went to the R.I.C. Barracks to see Mellows and sat beside him during my visit. When I stood up to leave I discovered that Liam had slipped his revolver into my pocket.

During Holy Week we were instructed to be on the alert and to have our communications ready to be put into operation at a moment's notice. We were also advised to go to confession and receive Holy Communion on Easter Sunday. On Holy Thursday night a tall woman, I think she was a Miss Browne, arrived

in Athenry at 8.30. I met her at the station. She had a message for Larry Lardiner. I do not know who the message was from. As Lardiner was not in Athenry that night, she gave me the letter to deliver to him. It was enclosed in an envelope and I do not know what it contained. The woman left on the midnight train for Galway City. I subsequently delivered the letter to Lardiner.

On Easter Sunday practically all Volunteers received Holy Communion. Later that morning a message was received in Athenry from McNeill stating that all parades of Volunteers arranged for the week-end were cancelled. At about 6 p.m. that evening another messenger came to Athenry to say that operations were postponed, but to remain in readiness for another mobilisation.

On Easter Monday a woman arrived on the 1.15 p.m. train with the news that Dublin was in action since 12 noon and orders to mobilise immediately. Orders were sent to all Companies to mobilise. The Athenry Company was to mobilise at the Town Hall. At about 9 o'clock that night we moved to the Department of Agriculture Farm, leaving scouts to inform late arrivals as to our whereabouts. On Tuesday, Mellows arrived at the farm with some other Companies. There were about 650 men. We had about twenty .303 service rifles, a few miniature rifles and about 300 shotguns. We had a good supply of home-made hand-grenades. While at the Farm I was promoted Brigade Quartermaster by Liam Mellows.

Afterwards I heard that the original plan was that each Company was to attack and capture all police Barracks in its area. At about noon on Wednesday we moved to Moyode Castle. We took cattle and sheep from the farm to feed the men, and also horses for transport purposes. We commandeered a load of flour which was being delivered from the mills in Galway to merchants in Loughrea. We distributed some of the flour amongst people living in the locality who baked it for us.

On Thursday we moved to Lime Park. On Friday, Mellows disbanded some of the men who had no arms, as we had some difficulty in feeding such large numbers. Very late on Friday night Father Tom Fahy arrived at the camp with the news that Dublin had surrendered and that British re-inforcements had arrived in Loughrea. A meeting of the officers was held to discuss the situation, at which the following were present - Liam Mellows, Alf Monahan, Matty Niland, Larry Lardiner, Brian Molloy, Nicholas Kyne, Frank Hynes, Tom Ruane, Carrmore, Joe Howley, Orammore, Pat Calanan and myself. Fr. Tom Fahy and Fr. Feeney were also present. Fr. Fahy told us the position as he understood it, and advised us to disband. Mellows at first refused to disband, but eventually agreed, saying he was sorry to do so without a fight, or words to that effect. Fr. Fahy then addressed the officers and men from the steps of the house. He told us that it had been decided to disband owing to the overwhelming forces against us, and that we deserved great credit for

being prepared to fight for the freedom of our country. Mellows advised us to hold on to our arms and to evade arrest for as long as possible, especially the officers. I went by car to Esker with Larry Lardiner and two or three others. From there I went to Fr. T. Fahy's house at Glenties where I remained till Sunday when a car arrived to take me to Fr. Melvin's house at Attymon.

Later that night I went with a priest to my brother who was a curate at Killoran. Later I went to the Cistercian Monastery, Roscrea, where I remained about two weeks. I went from there to Drumbane where I stayed for one week. I then went to the Cistercian Monastery, Mount Melleray, and remained there for ten or twelve days. My next move was to a farmer's house at Upperchurch where I spent four weeks. I then went to Borris-o-leigh and came to Dublin on an excursion train from Thurles. I remained in Dublin until September, when Fr. Tom Fahy got me a job in Maynooth College, where I met Alf Monahan and Frank Hynes who had also got employment there through Fr. Fahy. I remained there until the prisoners were released, and returned home on 19th June, 1917.

SIGNED *Seán Brennan*

DATE

*24/1/50*

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WITNESS

*Seán Brennan. Comdt.*