

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S.

349

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 349

Witness

Mr. Bernard Reilly,
Brendan Villa,
Kilkee,
Co. Clare.

Identity

Constable, R.I.C.
Ardfert, Co. Kerry, 1916.

Subject

- (a) Arrest of Sir Roger Casement at
Ardfert, Co. Kerry, 21.4.1916;
- (b) Seizure of the "Aud" by the British
Naval Authorities.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil

File No. S.1448

Form B.S.M. 2.

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STATEMENT BY MR. BERNARD REILLY,

Brendan Villas, Kilkee, County Clare.

I was a Constable in the R.I.C. stationed at Ardfert, County Kerry in April 1916. At 8 o'clock on the morning of the 21st April, 1916 I was Barrack Orderly when a man named O'Driscoll arrived at the Barrack door on horseback and made a report stating that his uncle, John McCarthy, had sent him to inform the police that he found a boat floating at the edge of the tide, that there were several articles in the boat which gave him the impression that somebody had landed. I conveyed the information to the Sergeant (Sergeant Tom Hearne) who was in his own quarters. Shortly after, Hearne took a Constable Lark² with him to the strand at Banna. I do not know what they did ^{during their absence} but they returned to the barracks at ^{A B H} about 11 a.m. with a farmer's horse and car conveying a boat. In addition to the boat they found three Mauser pistols and two packets of ammunition in the original package. They also found two or three small signalling lamps, a small map showing a sketch of the coast, and some other maps and papers. The Sergeant then directed ^{me to accompany him} ~~the men~~ ^{A B H} towards the coast again by a different road. Before we left the village the Sergeant sent

a report from the Local Post Office to Tralee. The Sergeant told me he had information that three men were seen coming from the direction of the place where the boat landed and it was quite possible they might be taking shelter or getting some refreshments in nearby houses.

The information about the landing had been spread through the village by Mollie Gorman, a local maid at ^{Allman's} ~~Gorman's~~ in Rathonaan, ^{ee} _{B.R.} but she did not come specially to the barracks to report this.

We called to houses making enquiries and continued thus until we came opposite McKenna's Fort. The Sergeant directed me to enter the Fort by the eastern side and he remained on the road smoking. As I entered the Fort, a man approached me from the shrubbery. He was a tall gentleman. He looked foreign to me and not generally the type one meets in the street. There was nothing unusual about his clothes. He wore a beard and had more or less an aristocratic appearance. I don't remember that his clothes were wet at that stage. He came towards me. I think I said "Good morning" or "Good day". I asked "What are you doing here?" He replied "Have I not a right to be here?". I continued "You are a stranger

here and at the moment we have instructions to look up all
strangers coming into the locality". He appeared to be a
little excited. He said; "I am an Englishman". "Where did
you come from?" I asked, and he answered "My name is Richard
Morton and I came from Denham in Buckinghamshire". I then
asked him what was his business to which he replied "I am
an author and I am at present writing a book on ^{the life of} Saint
Brendan and I expect I will be able to collect some statistics
in the locality". There were a couple of other incidents.
He was carrying a sword-stick which he was drawing in and
out and turning his head over his shoulder, which gave me the
impression that the other two were about. I was carrying
ammunition in a pouch I mean the rifle I carried was not loaded, but I carried
a rifle without ammunition. ^{BRA} I gave him to understand
that if he was going to draw the sword I was going to fire
the rifle. He gave me the impression that there was someone
else with him. Sergeant Hearne then came on the scene and
he also put a few questions to Sir Roger (We were not aware
of his identity at the time). He gave the Sergeant the same
information as he had given to me. The Sergeant said; "I am
not satisfied; would you mind accompanying us to the police
station?" He said "I have no objection". So we came on to
the public road which was about 75 yards south of the Fort.

Arriving at the public road we found a boy named Collins with a pony and trap. I took Casement into the Trap and sat beside him. The Sergeant remained behind on the spot, and we drove to ^{Aliman's} ~~Ormond's~~ farmhouse for the purpose of having ^{B.B.} Mary Gorman identify this man as one of those she had seen in the morning, or otherwise. (It was the Sergeant had this information.) I took this action on the Sergeant's instructions as he was not satisfied in the matter. Casement entered the yard of the farmhouse and when I pointed him out to Mary she identified him as one of the three men she had seen earlier. It was when Mary was milking cows between 3 and 4 o'clock in the morning that she had observed three men coming from the direction of the sea. The Sergeant had told me he had this information already ^{as} and he had been out ^{EB} all the morning. The report came in to me in the morning. After this incident we returned in the trap to where the Sergeant was awaiting us. It was then close on 12 o'clock. Sir Roger then said he would walk the rest of the way to ^{the} ~~the~~ ^{Adfert} ~~Port~~ ^{B.R.} which was about a mile off, hence the three of us (Sir Roger, the Sergeant and myself) walked on and a group of young fellows collected. Collins, the young fellow who had driven the pony and trap, was following up behind on the

journey back to Ardfert and he shoved a paper into my hand. Having looked at it, I showed it to the Sergeant. Collins said he saw the piece of paper being dropped behind by Casement whereupon he picked it up. This scrap of paper contained part of a code and it was later produced at the trial.

When we reached the Barracks some of the police officials were out from Tralee. Brittain, the local D.I., came to the Barracks then or very soon afterwards.

Some time after the D.I. arrived a police transport car came along and Casement was conveyed in this car to Tralee accompanied by the driver of the car and Constable Finnerty, as far as I know. The time would then be around 1 o'clock. Casement was kept in the Day Room in Tralee Barracks. On his arrival ^{at Ardfert} the ^{at Ardfert} Barrack servant got him a cup of tea. The other men who had been with Casement (Monteith and Bailey) were still in the locality and the rest of my time was spent in searching for them.

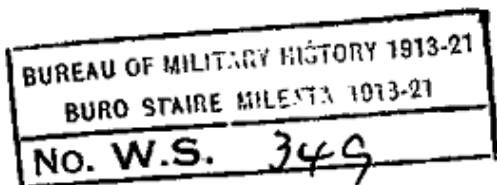
While in Ardfert Casement had seen no one except D.I. Brittain. Between ¹⁰~~10~~ and ³⁰11.0'clock the Sergeant had sent ^{BP} ^{BP}

a message to Tralee about the boat that was discovered and a little later the D.I. arrived from Tralee. It was some time after this that the police transport car already mentioned arrived.

The instructions we got were to request the people living along the coast to inform us if they saw any indications of a hostile landing. They always reported anything unusual they saw and this instruction was in existence from the outbreak of the War.

Sergeant Crowley, who was in Ballyheigue, told me that Austin Stack and Con Collins passed through the village in a motor some time between 12 and 1 o'clock on the day of Casement's arrest. They were going in the direction of

Causeway. On the evening of 21st April (date of landing) while a party of police were searching the forest I saw three overcoats been taken from a hiding-place in the shrubbery, in the pocket of one of these was found a railway ticket from Berlin signed: Bernard Keilly to I think, Wilhelmshaven. This ticket was produced in evidence at the trials during this search some packets of sandwiches were found, they were made up from a red coloured sausage & dark coloured bread.
Witness; _____ R Ki



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Brandon Vicia

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Dear Sir,

I am enclosing statement of Thomas Cortella 2nd Lt, 6th Co, 1st Regt, 1st Div, 1st Army, who seems to have been present in the
Trenches when Walter Ryan was executed by Rodgers & someone

I am also enclosing my own ^{statement} signed. I made some
corrections & took the liberty of adding some information
re. overcoats at Lanna at McKenna's Fort on 21st Oct '16.

You will kindly excuse the writing. I am still confined
to bed.

I have been reading an extract from Captain
Spindler's story of his part in the events of 1916 and
was reminded of a conversation I had with the
signature man of the Gunboat Bluebell, Sidney Waghorn.
I understood from him that the "Aud" had been shadowed
for a considerable distance down the coast and kept
under close observation while in Water Bay.

Captain Spindler seems to have thought he had
outwitted the captain of the "Shatter" who boarded
the "Aud" but it is very significant that immediately
he flashed the result of his examination of the
the captain of the "Shatter"

"The Aud"

~~the~~ the commander of the Bluebell took definite action by approaching to within about 3 miles distance from the Aud and asking "what is your name? where do you come from?" to which the Aud replied "The Aud" from Bergen to Lenoa with cargo; then to the question what are you doing here? the Aud replied? I have lost my bearings & am taking them from the Irish coast to which the Bluebell ordered "proceed" both vessels were at this time heading south, the Bluebell leading & keeping out to sea, after going a considerable distance the Aud showed signs of lessening speed and asked where are you taking me to? to which the Bluebell replied "to Queenstown for search" they were then approaching the Point Lightship, as the Aud seemed to be lessening speed the Bluebell signalled "faste;" and at the same time fired a shot across her bows, in a short time the signalman, Waghorn, saw the German Naval Ensign being hoisted on the Aud and immediately a cloud of white

smoke ^{was seen} to rise from the hold followed by a loud report at the same time a lifeboat with crew was seen to pull away from the And which went down by the stern in the course of a few minutes. The Bluebell then closed in & took Captain Spindler & 20 others in German Naval Uniform on board as prisoners.

~~It is~~ ^{It is} ~~also~~ ^{also} ~~stated~~ ^{stated} to me by Sidney Waghorn,

During the preliminary inquiry in London in May 1916 I saw one of the rifles salvaged from the sunken And, it seemed a cumbersome weapon, ten or twelve pounds in weight with a bore much larger than the ordinary service rifle, a .303 cartridge would pass right through the bore with something to spare.

I was present when a man in uniform who described himself as an Italian Ammiraglio Colonel, identified one of these rifles as having been made in an Italian Ammiraglio and supplied to the Russian Government on the same occasion a man who stated he was a Russian Colonel

bore out the Italian colonel's statement and identified the rifle as one of the type served out to a Russian regiment that was taken prisoner in the early stages of the war between Germany and Russia.

In his story Captain Spindler refers to the British warship whose captain and party ^{boarded} the "And as 'Shatter II'". The correct name of this boat was "The Heather" she was what was known in Navy circles as a "Sloop" and was engaged in coastwatching during the war years. In 1920 she was employed taking provisions & stores to coastguard & Marine stations on the coasts of Kerry & Glenc and had her headquarters at Fenit. In July 1920 she conveyed me from Fenit to Banna (near Kilnash Glenc) when I was leaving the R.I.C. and I have a sort of wish for her ever since.

Yours faithfully

B. Keilly

R. J. Feely Esq. Corwall

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