

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21
No. **W.S. 386**

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. **W.S.** 386.....

Witness

Mr. Frank Gaskin,
5 Royal Marine Terrace,
Bray,
Co. Wicklow.

Identity

Member of I.R.B. Liverpool 1911 - .

Member of Irish Volunteers Dublin 1914 - .

Subject

- (a) Howth and Kilcoole Gun-Runnings;
- (b) Magazine Fort, Easter Week 1916;
- (c) Munition Factory, Crown Alley, Dublin,
post 1916.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil

File No. **S.** 1515.....

Form B.S.M. 2.

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STATEMENT OF MR. FRANK GASKIN,

5, ROYAL MARINE TCE., BRAY.

I joined I.R.B. in 1911 when I was in Liverpool. Pat Lively and Dan McCarthy, Liverpool, approached me. Pat Lively swore me in. I joined the circle in Liverpool. Pat Lively was Centre. The circle had no particular name. We met nearly every Sunday in the Gaelic League Hall in Bootle. The proceedings were usually routine. Shortly after I came back to Dublin. I became attached to the Lord Edward Circle of which Pat O'Loughlin was Centre. Other members were Dan McCarthy, Joe McGrath, Paddy McGrath, Jack and Frank Mills, James Higgins, Charles Quinn, Laurence Flynn, Gerard O'Loughlin. We usually met in a room in James's Street. About that time we started drilling in 41, Parnell Square. Paddy Byrne, one of the Fianna, was the instructor.

When the Volunteers started I joined up at the first meeting in the Rotunda. Previous to this Greg Murphy came to a meeting of the Circle and advised us to join the Volunteers and the Gaelic League. Some time in 1914 Pat O'Loughlin retired as he was getting on in years and was not in good health. I was elected Centre of the Circle. I continued as Centre until 1918 when, owing to business reasons, I had to retire and Joe McGrath was elected Centre.

I took part in the Howth and Kilcoole Gun-Runnings as a member of "D" Company, 4th Battalion. Cathal Brugha was the first O.C. of this Company. French Mullen became O.C. prior to 1916. I kept contact with Liverpool and succeeded in getting a supply of small arms which were brought by Ted Kavanagh who was a seaman on one of Redcastle's boats.

The Centres' Board used to meet in 41, Parnell Square once a month, on, I think, the last Thursday of the month. I recollect the following Centres of Circles; Frank Lawless, P. J. Farrell, George Lyons, Seán Murphy, Greg Murphy, George Irvine, Val Jackson, S. O'Connor, Seán Tobin, Peadar Kearney, Seán Farrelly, Luke Kennedy, Tom Hunter, Con Colbert, B. Hobson.

I was present at a meeting of the Centres' Board in 41, Parnell Square on Holy Thursday night. B. Hobson presided. At the meeting someone said something about the Supreme Council having decided on a Rising on Easter Sunday. Hobson said that the time was not opportune. This was the first definite information I received that a Rising was to take place. I am nearly sure it was Holy Thursday as I recollect meeting on the following day, Good Friday, Dan McCarthy and Joe McGrath, and discussing the matter with them and deciding to go to confession in Mount Argus. We all did so on Holy Saturday.

I do not recollect being at any meeting of the Centres' Board on Good Friday or having got a summons to attend one.

I did not parade on Easter Sunday as I got word that the Rising was off. I paraded on Easter Monday with my Company at Emerald Square. Garry Holohan came along and asked for four Volunteers. I volunteered along with Paddy McGrath and two others. We went to Rutland Street, off Summerhill, from there to the Magazine Fort with Paddy Daly in charge. Paddy Boland and I went and disarmed the sentry and held up the guard. We disarmed the guard. The remainder of our party tried to get into the explosives store but did not succeed. They set fire to some of the

building. After about twenty minutes we left and I went to Marrowbone Lane to Seumas Murphy.

On Wednesday I got a message from Seumas Murphy to take to the Union but could not get in, also I took a message to Mrs. Cosgrave from Phil Cosgrave who resided opposite the Union. I then went to Roe's Distillery but found the Volunteers had evacuated it. I then went to the residence of Jack Mills in Mount Brown where I learned my brother-in-law, Charlie Quinn was lying badly wounded. He sent me to his home in Dolphin's Barn where I got a rifle and some ammunition. I was cut off by the military in the house and I used the rifle from the house. I was there until Friday. I heard of the surrender and I went home. On the following Monday I was arrested, taken to Kilmainham station and brought to Richmond Barracks.

I was later transferred to Wakefield Prison. I was released from Wakefield in July. I learned later that Supt. McFeely of the D.M.P. who lived near me, sent in a favourable report about me.

On returning to Dublin I got employment in the machine shop in Broadstone Railway Station, where we were making parts for shells for the British Army. We made hand-grenades there. As I was in charge of the moulding shop, I got ^{BENNY} Vincent Allen to make the pattern. We made a number of ~~trench mortars and shells~~ ^{HAND GRENADES THERE} to suit. We made them at night time. Joe Furlong approached me and later Seán Russell and I went and took charge of the shop in Crown Alley. It was at the back of a fitting shop owned by a man named Baker who carried on a legitimate business. I got a gas and air furnace installed there. The following

were employed there; - Dimmy Holmes, - Hussey, Paddy McHugh, - Maher and two others. We made there casings for hand-grenades and fittings for mines. We sent them to Luke Street for assembly. Joe Furlong was in charge there. Benny Allen made the pattern to take twelve grenades. When we got the gas and air furnace we were able to turn out two or three hundred grenades per day. I had a chill mould for making the aluminium necks for the grenades. We were never short of scrap iron but on one occasion we were very short of aluminium but got five hundred weight at £3 per cwt from a marine store. We got a lot of our supplies, including moulding sand, in Tonge & Taggarts' as young Tonge was favourably disposed to us. We were never discovered. I was transferred to the Engineers from my Company in the Volunteers and was prohibited from attending any meetings while on this work.

Towards the end we had great difficulty in obtaining supplies especially aluminium. We used cheddite at first but it was too sensitive and resulted in accidents. We later used ammonal and black powder and never had an accident with it.

SIGNED: *Frank G. ...*

DATE: 8th May 1950.

WITNESS: *D. J. Feely*

