

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 398

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. ....398.....

**Witness**

Brigid, Bean Ui Mhairtin (Ni Fhoghludha),  
"Cluana", Sidminton Road,  
Bray, Co. Wicklow.

**Identity**

Member of Cumann na mBan, Dublin;  
Courier to Cork, Holy Week, 1916.

**Subject**

- (a) National activities, 1913-1921;
- (b) G.P.J. Easter Week, 1916;
- (c) First Aid, O'Connell St., and  
Despatch work, Easter Week, 1916;
- (d) Bloody Sunday, November 1920.

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

Nil

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# ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

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No. W.S. 398

STATEMENT OF MRS. BRIGHID MARTIN  
(Ni Foghludha).

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As a schoogirl of 15, i.e., in 1902, I came to school in Dublin and joined the Keating Branch of the Gaelic League where my brothers and sisters were already members. My parents, who were from Youghal district, Killeagh, were Irish speakers.

I took an active part in all the activities of the Gaelic League, pageants, turasanna, aeriachta, &c. up to 1915, and knew all the members of the Branch who were afterwards associated with the Rising. In that year I joined Cumann na mBan - the Central Branch - that used to meet at 25 Parnell Square. Seamus Kavanagh and one of the Reddins used to instruct us in drill and signalling. Several doctors and nurses used to come and give us lectures in First Aid. Sorcha McMahon was secretary of the Branch and Mrs. Reddin, I think, was Treasurer.

Early in 1915 I was 'roped in' like all other members of the Cumann to do all sorts of tasks in aid of the Volunteers, carrying guns and dispatches for them. Fleming's of Drumcondra was a 'grocer's shop where the Volunteers had a habit of dumping arms. They were all in the movement. Joe McGuinness's shop in Dorset St. was another place to which I often took messages. J.J. Walsh's shop at the corner of Blessington St. and Berkeley Road was a meeting place for people in the movement.

I remember that Effie Taaffe and myself on one occasion carried two rifles under our coats from Fleming's to another house. I think it was Carolan's, where the attack was afterwards made on Den Breen. That was probably early in 1916.

At that time we had a typing office in O'Connell Street

instructions, &c. We sometimes also did typing work of this sort at home. I remember one occasion when Diarmuid Lynch and myself spent the whole night typing addresses on envelopes for the distribution of some circular. I cannot now remember what it was about. The name and address of Mackey's the Seed Merchants, were printed on the outside of the envelopes. Diarmuid had got them specially printed for the purpose. He was a Trojan for work and for making other people do it as well. He hardly spoke a word the whole night, so engrossed was he in the task and we only paused a couple of times for a cup of tea or coffee.

My brother Sean was an inspector of munitions in Birmingham in an adding machine factory that was taken over by the British government for the production of munitions. He was constantly sending material from Birmingham to the Volunteers here and I was used as a go-between by Sean McDermott, who gave me messages to carry over to him. I never knew what the messages were, although Sean McDermott and Eamon Ceannt had at an early stage suggested that it would be advisable for me to know what the messages were, as I was incurring risk. I told them I would prefer not to know, as in that way I would find it easier to pretend innocence. I never brought back any arms from England. Sean McDermott had warned me at an earlier stage: "Always have a nightie and a toothbrush ready as you never know when you may be sent with a dispatch".

At the time Liam Mellows was in England after being deported, about three weeks before the Rising, I was asked to go to Birmingham and stay in the Midland Hotel, taking a dispatch to my brother. The next day Barney Mellows came to the hotel where my brother had already arrived to meet him. There was no place for me to bring them for privacy except my bedroom. They discussed the plan which was evidently the subject of my dispatch. It was that Barney should take the

place of Liam in the place near Birmingham or Manchester where the latter was staying. The plan was put into execution and Liam came back to Ireland via Liverpool dressed as a priest and accompanied by Nora Connolly with whom I had been in touch in Birmingham, and incidentally, I gave her the loan of a blouse as she was away from home for some time.

In the course of a week I got a wire "Mother arrived safely". That was my cue that I could come home, which I did. I should mention that on the outward journey I made four attempts before I was able to sail from Dunlaoghaire, owing to the presence of submarines in the Irish Sea.

After my return from Birmingham I remember there was extraordinary activity in our back office which was at the disposal of Sean McDermott and Ceannt at all times. They seemed to be having meetings there. Pearse, Clarke, McDermott, McDonagh and Ceannt were constantly there. I don't remember Joe Plunkett coming there at all.

I have a distinct recollection of the Keating Branch Ceilidhe on Palm Sunday. It was the first time we realised that something unusual was approaching. The excitement was intense. There had been a Volunteer route march that day and they all came back full of enthusiasm. Nobody said anything definite, but we girls were discussing it among ourselves. We knew then that the Rising was coming soon.

I think it was the Friday before Palm Sunday I came back to Ireland.

On Monday evening I was sent by Sean McDermott on the 6.30 train to Cork with a written dispatch for Tomas McCurtain. I went to his house in Blackpool. They were in bed and I had to knock them up. After giving me a cup of tea, his sister-in-law took me to the headquarters of the Volunteers in Brothers

in to McCurtain and gave him my dispatch. He had a little discussion with a few others and then gave me a dispatch to bring back. I think I went to the Windsor Hotel and came back the next day. I must have got the morning train from Cork and arrived in Dublin about midday. I went home for a meal and then took my dispatch to Sean McDermott at our office in Reis' Chambers. He told me to keep in readiness: "I might want you again".

That evening he and Eamon Ceannt came in to the back office and told me that I had to go off to Cork again that night. I took two dispatches this time by the same train as before. This time I went direct to the headquarters at Brothers Sheares' St. At Kingsbridge I saw Charlie Power but did not speak to him. I gave one dispatch to McCurtain again and he gave me another in reply. I never knew what was in any of these dispatches and, as in the previous cases, I refused to be informed. Two Volunteers escorted me from headquarters to the Windsor Hotel as it was so late. On the Thursday morning, for some reason or other, I went to Queenstown with a dispatch for Mr. Healy, a barrister. After some time, during which Mr. Healy went out and I had a meal, he came back and told me to bring a verbal message - he refused to give me a written one, although I asked him - that it would not be possible to send the message, that it would be intercepted by the British Navy. My own personal opinion was that he was not a bit enthusiastic about the whole thing and never left the house at all. I returned to Cork and to Dublin, arriving about 7.30. I went straight from Kingsbridge to 25 Parnell Square and delivered the dispatch from McCurtain and the verbal message from Healy to Sean McDermott. After my giving the dispatch Sean said: "Will you be able for Kerry tomorrow morning? Wait here for a bit". I said I'd go, if required. In a short time he came back

\* See last page

Ned Daly, who was present, said the same thing. I replied: "Don't let that stop you. I am ready to go if you want me to". I went home. At that time we lived in Cabra Road. I cannot remember anything particular about Good Friday or Holy Saturday. I was always expecting to be sent on a message, but none came.

On Sunday at 5 o'clock, Gearoid O'Sullivan came up in a Thompson taxi with a written dispatch to be taken to Tomas McCurtain. My younger sister and myself travelled in the taxi. We had four punctures on the way and I was in a fever of anxiety and was very impatient with the driver, barely allowing him to get out to have a cup of tea in Thurles. It was a frightful night. I never saw such heavy rain. We did not leave the taxi, hoping this would hasten the driver. Before entering Cork, at a place called Dunkettle, our driver was held up by two policemen who travelled with us the rest of the journey to the city - to the Windsor Hotel. It was clear to me that word was sent from Dublin to the Cork police that our taxi had left Dublin - I think the firm had to report to the Castle at that time when a taxi was engaged for a long journey - because the policemen asked our driver why he was so late. On the journey to the hotel one of the policemen asked me had I a dispatch of any description. I said no. He then asked me why I had come to Cork. I said: "I have an appointment with my brother, Thadhg, to discuss with him the purchase of some paper from Spicer Bros. This was an English firm from which we used to buy supplies. This was the first thing that came into my head. My brother used often to be at the Windsor and was well-known there and I did think he might be there the next day for the races.

The policemen let us go into the hotel and they went with the driver to the garage and searched the car and the driver. We booked a room and my sister went to bed. I.

thinking I might be searched, hid the dispatch under the carpet felt far in under the leg of the bed. I had barely done this when the porter knocked on the door and told me to come downstairs that the police wanted me. I told him it was very late and that they might wait till morning. He went away and I got into bed. In a very short time he was back to say that they insisted on seeing me and I was to come down immediately. So I went downstairs in my nightdress with my coat over it. I thought I would have the first word and said: "What is the meaning of this? It is an extraordinary thing if I can't come to my native city without being interfered with by the police". They asked me a whole lot of questions, again whether I had a dispatch and what brought me to Cork. They made me open my mouth and looked under my tongue, and in my coat pockets. The extraordinary thing was that they never went to my room to examine my case. They told me that I was under arrest but that as the barracks were next door and I was already prepared for bed, I could sleep in the hotel. They added that I need not attempt to escape as there was a guard of two policemen on the hotel.

Needless to say, I did not sleep a wink. I was wondering what I would do with my dispatch. I was terribly upset that I was not able to deliver it that night. When I came down to breakfast in the morning I had it on me, but securely hidden. I stood at the halldoor of the hotel and a policeman came up to me and said I was no longer detained and could go wherever I liked.

When we took our places at the table two men came and occupied the other two seats. They ordered their breakfast and entered into conversation with us, asking whether we were going to the races and when I said no, they asked us innocently what we were in Cork for on a Bank Holiday and so on. I answered equally innocently with the same story as I had given the

the preceding night to the police. Of course, I was well aware that they were detectives.

After breakfast, we came to the front porch again, pretending to see what the weather was like. They came too.

Then I said to my sister: "I suppose you are too tired to come out; I want to go to the chapel to say my prayers". I put on my hat and coat and went out. I went up to the first policeman I met and asked him where was the Augustinian Church. He said St. Patrick's was just here, much nearer; but I said I wanted the Augustinians - I knew a priest there and I thought if the worst came to the worst I might be able to leave the dispatch with him for awhile.

Two other detectives took up the trail and followed me down the quays to the Augustinian Church. I must have looked a bigger mug than I was, because they stayed outside. So I made my way out by the back of the Church and got to McCurtain's in Blackpool. It must have been then 11 or 11.30.

Tomas was not there, but his brother came while I was there. He had just come from manoeuvres on a bicycle and said it was impossible to get at his brother as all the Cork Volunteers were on the march back. His language was lurid, although he did not open the dispatch. "Why the bloody hell don't they make up their minds in Dublin. We don't know what to do with all the commands and counter-commands". On looking back ever since on that mission, I have felt unhappy about it and have always had a sense of failure.

I realised on discussing it afterwards with Sean McDermott that I could not have acted otherwise than I did. Of course, I did not know then that the Volunteers had gone to Macroom. I presume they knew in Dublin where they were and I wondered often why I was not sent to where the manoeuvres were. I got the impression that neither



get in touch with Tomas, but the Brother said that if I gave him the dispatch he would see that it would be delivered to him. The brother came in while I was talking to Mrs. McCurtain in the shop and they spoke a few words privately to each other which I did not overhear. As I came away I felt rather unhappy.

I walked along and got an outside car to go back to the hotel. When I arrived there two G-men were waiting on the steps. They asked me where I went after leaving the church. I told them I was only walking around. They asked the jarvey where he picked me up, but as it had been a good distance away from Blackpool, they were no wiser about my movements. They then told me that I was to be out of Cork by 5 o'clock. At the hotel I heard rumours that the Volunteers had passed. We had our lunch and started back for Dublin in the taxi. We had no mishaps on this journey. I could not describe the agony of mind I went through on the outward journey and I have the same feeling every time I think of it since. It looked as if fate was against us. But perhaps it was all for the best. We had a cup of tea at Thurles and we heard there that the Volunteers were out in Dublin.

Nothing happened until we came to Inchicore where we were stopped by the British military. They let us through, but not down the quays or the N.C.Road. We had to make a detour by Ashtown to Cabra Rd. where we dismissed the taxi. I don't think I got any money for that journey and I don't know who paid for the taxi or if it was ever paid for. I gave a tip to the driver.

I started out straight for the G.P.O. and succeeded after some difficulty in getting in. I saw Sean McDermott and Pearse and told them my tale of woe. Sean said I had hard luck but that I should not worry, as they had sent other dispatches as well and I was not to worry. They all seemed in great form

that night. Sean told me to try and go home to get a sleep and come in again the following morning. I did that.

The following day I arrived again at the G.P.O. making several detours. There was an atmosphere of great elation and excitement. I made a tour of the P.O., visiting the restaurant and all the other places. The faces of many of the Volunteers were black from making the munitions. They had lead from the Freeman's Journal office. I can still see the vision of the big sides of beef going into the ovens for their lunches. That morning - Tuesday - Sean McDermott sent me over to the Hibernian Bank with a message to Captain Weafer. I had no difficulty in getting across the street. Weafer sent me on a message to Reis Chambers to our own offices which were, of course, now occupied by the Volunteers. I remember seeing all the covers of the typewriters turned upside down and filled with water. I can't remember to whom I gave the written message from Weafer, but whoever it was gave me a written message to bring back to Weafer. I again went back to the G.P.O. with a written message to Sean McDermott. It was harder to get across this time on account of the increased firing. I gave Sean the message and saw them all again. Sean told me to go back and report to Capt. Weafer and to do whatever he asked me to. My sister, <sup>Hora</sup> ~~Wanda~~, was in the Hibernian Bank, having been mobilised on the Monday. Capt. Weafer sent the two of us and Maire Lawless to open a First Aid station at Skelton's, 14 Lr. O'Connell St. It used to be a tailor's shop, but it was vacant at the time. First of all we went into Clery's shop on the instructions of Capt. Weafer. We got aprons, sheets and towels, soaps and dishcloths and anything that would be useful to tear up into bandages. We must have been very simple, because in the middle of our activities we started trying on fur coats. Having collected our requirements

found there and who volunteered to come with us to the First Aid Station as there were lots of other girls in Clery's. Mrs. Martin Conlon came to us, I think, on the Wednesday,

Having arrived at Skelton's, my sister started to scrub down all the rooms which were filthy, having been so long unoccupied. While she was engaged at that, the rest of us went out to the D.B.C. to collect some food - we had not had a bite to eat all day. We brought back anything we could get. The Volunteers had already removed most of the food supplies, but we got butter, bread and tea. We also procured some condensed milk somewhere. We had a great feed by candlelight. I don't know how we boiled the water. I know that on the following day we had to light a fire for this. We had only two chairs and no mattresses or any other comfort, so we did not sleep all night.

I remember the next day a civilian was brought in terribly badly wounded on a stretcher. I think he was Maebh Cavanagh's brother. Dr. Tucky came in. I can't say whether we sent for him or whether he came with the stretcher. He asked me to hold a bowl of water while he was washing the wounded man. He was an awful sight as he was frightfully badly wounded in the stomach. I stuck it out as long as the doctor was doing his part, but when I took away the bowl of water I got good and truly sick. I think he died soon after. Dr. Tucky stayed until the ambulance came - I have no idea who sent for it or where it came from or went to with the wounded man, who, I think, was now dead. That was the only casualty we had. I remember going to the Hibernian Bank that evening and finding everybody in great consternation, as Captain Weafer had been killed.

I have a hazy idea that I went across O'Connell St. to the G.P.O. on Wednesday evening with a white flag on a stick,

with bullets flying around me. I can't remember what I went for. I remember Sean McDermott wondering whether there was any point in our staying on at Skelton's, when I told him we had only one casualty. I have a distinct recollection of getting a cup of tea with real milk on that occasion. I could not use the condensed milk.

I went back to Skelton's and told them what Sean said. We decided to stay there that night anyway. That was the night the bombardment began. I don't know what the others felt, but I was terrified. During the night Maire Lawless was sitting on one of our two chairs fast asleep and quite oblivious of everything. I envied her. The next day my two sisters - Kate had come in to us from somewhere else - and myself and Mrs. Conlon made our way to Church St. to try and see my brother Michael and Martin Conlon, and also to see whether we could give any help there. I think we stayed in Church St. that night. We had no difficulty in getting through as we made up all sorts of pitiful stories about sick relatives, &c.

On Friday a lot of us were sent home. There were too many Cumann na mBan about and the food was running short. We walked along past the Broadstone up to Phibsboro and, although the British held us up at the barriers, they let us through when we said we were going home to Cabra Road. We called in to see Maire Lawless at Dalymount to see how she had got on. We stayed with her that night as she was terrified, being alone in the house. The next day, Saturday, we went to see the O'Hanrahans in Connaught St. and I think we went to Mrs. O'Doherty's house and knocked at the door, but there was no one in. Mrs. O'Hanrahan made us stay for

dinner, of which we were glad, as we knew there was nothing in our own house. It was while we were there we heard the rumours of the surrender. When we went to our own house we found the door smashed in and the rooms in disorder after a search by the military. There was £500 hidden in the house, up the chimney, belonging to the Volunteers, and we found it intact. Some time afterwards, on my brother Mick's instructions, that money was given to Mrs. Clarke. Micheal was not arrested and he went on the run to Miss O'Donnell in Oakley Road, who gave him massage treatment for his feet which had been too tightly bandaged after an injury he got in Church St. We put a plank of wood in the doorway and slept in the house that night.

It was the next day the military got so strict and so active and they would not let us go to the Masses we wanted. Cabra Road people were told to go to 10 o'clock Mass.

All that Sunday we were filled with anxiety and uncertainty as we were not allowed to go anywhere.

On Monday Effie Taaffe arrived and the two of us went to a few of the hospitals to inquire if any wounded Volunteers were there for whom we could take messages to their people. We got and delivered a few messages. Effie stayed with us that night and we went round to the hospitals again the next day on a similar mission and got back to Cabra Road about 2 p.m. While I was having my dinner, several soldiers and three detectives arrived and searched the house. Again they failed to find the money or anything incriminating; but they arrested me and told my sister that I might not be returning and that I should take an overcoat and a case. Six soldiers and three detectives brought me to the lorry which they had left at the other side of the blown-up bridge. I refused to climb into the lorry unless they got a ladder or something. One of them went to a house and commandeered a chair and I had to get in.

One of the soldiers asked me did I know where I was going. I said I didn't and didn't care. He told me that the soldiers were digging a trench in the yard of Richmond Bks. and they were going to put 500 Sinn Feiners in it and bury them alive. I said if we couldn't live for Ireland we could die for it. On our journey we collected Marie Ferolz, O'Leary Curtis in Nth. Gt. Georges St., Mrs. Clarke in Richmond Road, Arthur Griffith in St. Lawrence Road, Clontarf, and several others. We were all taken to Ship St. Barracks. During the night a variety of people - not all of them Sinn Feiners - were brought in. There was an awful din. One woman especially was making a row. When I asked her why she was there she said she had run after one of the Volunteers with a loaf of bread and a soldier had dashed it out of her hand. She lifted a stone and threw it at the soldiers who arrested her. I told her that one of our friends - Mrs. Clarke - was very ill and asked her to shut up and give her a chance to rest. She replied that if she made enough row and we objected, they would let her go. She told the policeman that she had left a young baby at home and wanted to feed it. She was let out.

Mrs. Clarke could speak of nothing but the coming execution of the leaders, which she was convinced would take place. At 2 a.m. she was summoned as her husband was to be executed that morning. They took her in a lorry, but after the interview, she did not come back to Ship St. That was a terrible place; there were no sanitary arrangements. A sergeant came with a bucket which he placed behind the door. We became infested with fleas and lice.

On Wednesday morning the Volunteers in Ship St. and ourselves were marched up to Richmond Barracks. They kept the women there only a couple of hours. We were then marched

They were all marvellous. We sang all the national songs through the night, although the soldiers tried to shut us up. The prison was filthy as it had not been used for 16 years. There were no chairs, or forms or tables. We had to sit on the dirty floors with our backs against the dirty walls. We got skilly in bowls that night; this was a sort of watery porridge. We got the same in the morning. We had no appetite for our skilly that day as we heard the shots that killed our leaders. The military sergeant did not leave us in any doubt. He came in and told us with great satisfaction that "four more were gone today".

When we wanted to go to the lavatory we had to knock at the door and two soldiers with fixed bayonets brought us to the lavatory which was a dry closet that had no door. The soldiers stood jeering at whatever girl was in the closet, with the result that for the eleven days I was in Kilmainham I never went to the lavatory and on my transfer to Mountjoy I had to be treated at once and for a long time after by Dr. Cook, the prison doctor. This horrible experience had a permanent effect on my constitution.

After three or four days in Kilmainham, seventy-two out of seventy-three women prisoners were released, leaving me quite alone there.

We were all summoned one night to the large space in the ground floor where several military officers and soldiers were assembled. They called a roll from a list of names which they read by the aid of a lantern. My name was not called and the officer, thinking there was some mistake, asked what my name was and had it not been called. I gave him my name in Irish, of course, and he said that was no use to him. A detective who was present said the matter was all right, that I was 'wanted'.

I spent that night by myself in Kilmainham - in a different cell - so terrified that I remained on my knees behind the cell door all night. I should mention that the soldiers often were drunk and two of the Church St. priests thought it advisable one night to stay in the prison all night for the protection of the girls.

The next day - Monday, I think - a fresh batch of prisoners was brought in, including Kit and Nell Ryan, Dr. Kathleen Lynn, Madeline French Mullen, Countess Plunkett, Winifred Carney, Marie Perolz, Helena Molony, Nellie Gifford and Annie Higgins, who afterwards lost her life so tragically in a fire in Parnell Square. Some of these had been with me in Ship St. and had evidently been kept there. Countess Markievicz was brought in one day. She was in uniform and shouted to us "penal servitude for me". She seemed delighted with herself.

The following Saturday or Sunday, in the middle of the night, we were all brought in the Black Maria to Mountjoy Prison. We made some fun for ourselves on the journey. We remained there for about six weeks. After Kilmainham it was just like going into an hotel, even though we had only a plank bed. It was spotlessly clean and we had sheets and they did our laundry for us. We had a very decent woman - Miss O'Neill - as wardress. After the Bishop of Limerick's letter was published, we could do what we liked. She was very religious. At first we had only half an hour's exercise together, but after a short while our cell doors used to be left open.

The Governor and the Assistant Matron, Miss Armstrong, a Protestant, were very decent to us. After awhile, with her connivance, we used to cook sausages, bacon and eggs, which we got from our friends, for our tea.

My sister Nora paid me regular visits to discuss what



we were going to do with our house - our business was already gone. I suggested that she should open an office where we first had one, in 25 Bachelor's Walk. I drafted a circular for her and from memory made out a list of our former customers and gave her, also from memory, the figures of the sums that were owed to us by our customers. All our customers, with few exceptions, stood by her, and the landlord, Mr. John E. Cox, refused to take any rent until Mick and I were back in "circulation". The Governor of the gaol gave me permission to have a business visit every day.

One day, towards the end of June, we were individually interviewed by Major Price, the Governor, and the Lady Superintendent, Miss McCarthy. We were given the option of living at Oxford or Reading at our own expense and were asked to sign a document to that effect. I refused, saying I had no private means and could not afford it. Others followed my example. They were nonplussed at our refusal. Those who signed the document were allowed to go home and make arrangements. I think a question was asked in Parliament by Alfie Byrne and they were not further interfered with.

The five of us who refused to sign were kept in another week. Then at 2 o'clock one night we were brought in taxis to Kingstown with three detectives and two wardresses dressed in plain clothes. They told us to tell nobody on the boat that we were prisoners. I told everybody. We asked for our breakfast and we got a grand one - we enjoyed the journey after being cooped up in one place. On the train three carriages were booked and we were left in one by ourselves. We insisted on getting our dinner. It was very good. I don't know who paid for it. We were brought from Euston to Victoria in taxis, but we missed our connection. We then insisted on

returning to the station we got separated by the traffic policeman's signal and Marie Perolz and myself could have escaped but we did not like to leave the others.

We were taken to Brighton by mistake and we had to wait for our connection to Lewes with the result that it was after midnight when we arrived. We refused to walk to the prison as we were tired and they had to get cabs for us. The matron was knocked up out of bed and she offered us a cup of tea which we refused. She told us we were lucky that we did not arrive at the time we were expected as there were people waiting to stone us; they expected us to be wearing shawls and she expressed surprise that we were not hooligans.

They had cleared all the men from the prison for our accommodation. They provided us with proper beds and other furniture. We had no lights in the cells.

We insisted on having Mass on Sundays. The first Sunday the priest of the parish came in the afternoon to give us Benediction. He was a very old man; he told us he had only ten parishioners and he used to cry his eyes out when I told him about Ireland and that thousands went to Communion in Dublin on a First Friday. From that on we had Mass every Sunday. Marie Perolz and I were released after four or five weeks. This would be the end of July or beginning of August. We were all taken before the Advisory Committee in the House of Commons. The charge they had against me was connection with the landing of arms on the Kerry coast, which shows that their information was not too exact. On this occasion we were entertained to lunch by Alfie Byrne in the House of Commons and to tea - with strawberries and cream - at Lyons' Corner House. He came to the station with us and loaded us down with boxes of chocolate. The wardresses did not know what to make of it, especially when he presented them with

beings.

After my return home, the thing that was uppermost in my mind was the bad bread we had got in prison. So I started to organise "25" drives to make money to have bread sent weekly to Frongoch to the imprisoned members of the Keating Branch. We sent twenty large pans and about 6 lbs. of butter each week and a slab of cake periodically. We also levied 6d per week on each of the members of the Keating Branch. This went on until the general release at Christmas.

There was nothing much doing then until the arrest of another group of men for their alleged connection with a German Plot in February 1917. My brother Mick was one of those arrested and deported, first to Oxford and then to Fairford.

During all this time there were collections for the Prisoners' Dependents. We organised concerts, aeridheachta, card-drives and all sorts of things to bring in funds. I remember Mick Collins being a great worker in connection with these things.

In the middle of August 1917 Tom Ashe was staying at our house - he often stayed with us. One of my sisters was getting married and he was there for the wedding. Going down town a few days after, he was arrested and his subsequent fate is well known. His funeral was marvellous and was the first public display of sympathy since the Rising with anyone who was ready to face death for his national principles.

I don't remember anything of outstanding importance until the Conscription time. I was on the Phibsboro Committee of the anti-conscription organisation. It did not last very long and we had only a few meetings as, owing to the vigorous protests made, the Bill was dropped as far as Ireland was concerned.

It was really the anti-conscription movement that revived national feeling in the country and made the subsequent fight in '19, '20 and '21 possible. It made them realise that they had a country and that if they pulled together, something might be eventually achieved. This solidarity that was brought about by the threat of conscription, to my mind, led to the success of the general election at the end of the year.

From June 1918 on, the bad epidemic of influenza began to rage all over the country. It became impossible to get nurses or admission to hospital. Whole families were prostrated by it, especially in the congested areas of Dublin, so that there was nobody to attend to the sick.

Cumann na mBan was asked by their Executive to step into the breach and they did very good work among the poor. They visited them in their homes, cleaned their places, cooked for them, etc. Even rich people who could well afford to pay nurses could not get them and Cumann na mBan helped some of these too.

I was present at the opening of the Dail on 21st January 1919, having got a card from Mick Collins, which I am handing in to the Bureau. There was great excitement over this and it brought tremendous crowds to the Mansion House. I remember the cheering ovation de Valera got when he arrived. Everybody got a great cheer as the roll was called. It was a very impressive scene.

Although I married in June 1918, I continued my activities in Cumann na mBan and the Gaelic League. I carried on my business in 15 College Green where we rented a few rooms at the top. We gave the use of one of them to Dáil Éireann. They had a set of keys and could enter the room whenever they liked. Diarmuid O'Hegarty, Gearoid O'Sullivan and a typist worked there regularly. My brother Sean, who had returned

from England and joined me in the business, thought it advisable to take another office on the other side of the street so as to distribute our expensive machines for fear of raids. He gave permission to Bob Price to use it for Volunteer purposes. Bob worked there every day with a typist and eventually it was raided, probably as the result of some information supplied by the caretaker who was an ex-R.I.C. man. Our own office was also raided and soon after that the Dail Éireann people left.

At this time I had a car and when the Volunteers wanted to use it, they merely sent me word and I left the key in it. The Volunteers would return it in a couple of hours. I was not supposed to know it was gone.

During the Black and Tan period the office was raided dozens of times and our machines destroyed as well as our stock. The Tans took the trouble of unrolling the spools of tape and scattering them in tangled heaps on the floor, so that they could not be used. On one occasion they wrote up on the wall in large red, white and blue letters: "Do not work for Dail Éireann or ??? By Order of the Black and Tans". This remained on the wall until we closed up our business in 1925, when my husband was moved to London.

We lived in Leeson Park Avenue from 1918 and kept people 'on the run'. Austin Stack, Frank Fahy and Piaras Beaslaoi frequently slept at our house where they were always welcome. In a short time, however, the detectives got wise to this and one night two of them came in by the back and asked was Austin Stack there. Frank Fahy had only just left the house and I had to send him and the others word that the house was watched.

I remember nothing of interest until Bloody Sunday. My husband and myself went early to Croke Park but could not get in at once as the Committee were wondering whether the ground

should be opened at all. The match was well advanced when the Tans quietly took up their position at the canal side of the grounds and swept the field with machine gun fire. A panic ensued. We stayed where we were, not stirring, as we saw it was impossible to move. A man beside us had the heel of his boot blown off by a bullet. Another man's hat was shot off his head. People were beside themselves and started to climb insurmountable walls. In a couple of minutes the British military came in by the canal and held up the Black and Tans and made them stop firing. Others came in by the main gate and attempted to restore order. If they had not come as promptly as they did there would have been a massacre of the whole crowd, as the Black and Tans had run amok. The military martialled the crowd and got them out of the field in a more or less orderly fashion, examining each one going out, feeling their pockets and asking whether they had any revolvers and what they knew about the shooting of the officers. I remarked to the officer who examined us that it was a disgrace to let out those lunatic Black and Tans. He replied that we were fortunate that the military had arrived so quickly. We called all those forces Black and Tans, but in fact they were Auxiliaries that behaved so disgracefully in Croke Park.

Our offices during all this time continued to be used for the transmission of dispatches and various prominent members of the Volunteers dropped in from time to time for news or for a chat. Tom Cullen, Dick McKee, Niall MacNeill, Frank and Hugh Thornton, Feadar Clancy and many others were frequent visitors.

One Friday night, early in 1921, Auxiliaries under Major King made a raid on our house in Beeson Park Avenue

husband. He, while being sympathetic to the cause, had no connection whatever with the Volunteer movement. They probably confused him with Eamon Martin who was a very active Volunteer. My husband was away in Dundalk or Drogheda on business at the time. When asked by Major King where he was I told him, adding that he would be home the next day for his lunch at 1 o'clock. Major King asked me various questions, among them whether I was a Sinn Feiner. I said I was and he replied: "Do you know that I could put you against the wall and shoot you for that?" I said I was quite aware of it and that I was not the first and probably would not be the last to be treated like that.

They searched the house thoroughly for more than an hour, removing bricks from the fireplace. They were scattered through various rooms, including my bedroom. When leaving, Major King asked me to sign a paper that nothing was taken. I refused, saying I did not know what, if anything, had been taken; I went into the drawing-room and found that the carpet was covered with a mass of cigarette butts that were ground into it. I said to Major King that he had great control over his pigs. He called the men and made them pick up all the butts and apologised to me. He was very polite to me, although he had a very bad name.

The next morning when I went to the office I found the Auxiliaries there waiting for me. They asked again where my husband was. I said I had told them the previous night where he was and when he would be home. As a matter of fact, my husband, who had come back by the morning train, was at this time at the other side of the road with my brother, Risteard, watching the raid on the office. The Auxiliaries departed saying they would go to the house later and to be sure to have my husband there. My husband and I went home together by tram and as we were finishing our lunch a lorry load of Auxiliaries arrived. Only two came in - Major King and a man whose name

I afterwards learned to be John Reynolds. They said they were arresting my husband. I asked whether they would wait while he had a cup of coffee and offered them some. They were a bit surprised at the offer, but after some hesitation they accepted it. I asked Major King where they were taking him to. He replied to Dublin Castle and that I could see him any time. Joe walked out with Major King in front. The other man turned to me and said in a low voice: "That is not so. My name is Reynolds, and if you ask for me, I'll see that your husband gets anything you bring him".

The next day, Sunday, I went to the Castle gate with cigarettes and other comforts. In reply to my question I was informed that he was not in the Castle, but he might be in Richmond Barracks. I then asked for Reynolds. He told me that Joe was there. He took the stuff that I brought and duly delivered them to my husband. I went several times during the following week with food and clothes and each time I handed them over to Reynolds. I was never allowed to see my husband.

Alfie Byrne came to me on Monday and said he was going to see Commissioner Barrett to get my husband out. I said he could do as he liked, but I was not asking for any concessions. After about 10 days Joe was released. He had been kept in the guardroom and while he was there the members of the Corporation were arrested and brought to the Castle. Micheal 'O Loingsigh, whom Joe knew, was one of those brought in.

There was an old soldier from Tipperary in charge of the guardroom who was very decent to my husband, and on one occasion defended him against a charge of having poisoned the cocoa in an urn that was always kept boiling for the Auxiliaries on their return from raids. Joe had many conversations with this soldier about Knocknagaw and other matters of interest.



to both of them. He asked the soldier how he could remain in the British army which was doing such horrible things in Ireland. This poor soldier hated the conduct of the Auxiliaries and he afterwards committed suicide.

For Reynolds' kindness to Joe I took him up a box of 100 cigarettes and had a long chat with him. I sent word to Mick Collins that I thought this man might be sympathetic.

At Mick's suggestion, Reynolds was encouraged to visit our office and eventually I invited him to our house in Leeson Park Avenue. I sounded him cautiously and at last asked him point blank would he give information if he was paid for it. He promptly said he would. I sent word to Collins to this effect and a meeting was arranged in the office in 15 College Green. Reynolds turned up expecting to meet Mick Collins. He did not, of course, come, as there was a feeling that the Castle might have been laying a trap for him through Reynolds. Hugh Thornton, Frank's brother, arrived. After a short conversation in which I took no part, it was agreed that Reynolds would meet Frank Thornton to arrange terms.

Through Reynolds, complete information was obtained of the movements and plans of the Auxiliaries. He gave several photographs including one that was once published in the Capuchin Annual showing a group of Auxiliaries. He gave a key to this photo and thus all the prominent Auxiliaries became known to Mick Collins' Squad. The information supplied by Reynolds led to many successful ambushes of the Auxiliaries and to the failure of many of their raids on Volunteer houses.

Suspicion of Reynolds must have been at last aroused, because he was transferred to Corofin in Co. Clare, to the Black and Tans. After a short time there he was arrested, having been caught handing out arms to the Volunteers. He was brought back in custody to Dublin. He was

to me to ask me to call to see him. I went and he said to me that Mick Collins had promised him that if he got into any difficulty of the kind he was now in, Mick would arrange for his defence. I failed to find Mick Collins, but I interviewed Dick Mulcahy, the Chief of Staff, in some house in Leeson St. Dick said they could not do anything, as Reynolds had been well paid for any information he supplied.

Eventually I located Mick Collins who got Paddy Lynch to defend him. At this time Reynolds was some months in Beggars Bush fearing he would certainly be shot. I had visited him a few times and brought him food and other comforts. Fortunately for him, he was never tried as the Truce came and brought about his release.

He did not return to England and when the Free State was being formed, he was taken into it and, being useful, he was made a Commandant. He was appointed to the command of Renmore Barracks. He was eventually suspended by Gearoid O'Sullivan, the Adjutant General, for handing over arms to "Baby" Duggan, who was in charge of the I.R.A. in that district.

I cannot recall any other important events in my experience that would be of particular interest to the Bureau of Military History. We were constantly called upon in the office to help the Volunteers in any way they wanted us. We typed for them and lent them typewriters which, in some cases, were not returned. Some of them, which were destroyed in raids, were paid for, others were not. We made a claim in respect of typewriters that were broken up during a Black and Tan raid on the office and were allowed half the amount of our claim, but the amount was never paid; it was kept for arrears of income tax by the Cosgrave government. You remember that at one stage we were advised not to pay income tax, but to invest the amount in Dail Bonds which we did. The Bonds were paid in full by

I applied for my medals in respect of service in 1916 and the subsequent period. I was only granted them about four years ago through the instrumentality of Lily O'Brennan and Ellis Ni Riain (Mrs. O'Connell). On principle, I never applied for a pension.

Signed: Brian Martin (Ni Foghlua)  
 Date: 16<sup>th</sup> June 1950

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21 BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21 No. W.S. 398
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\* On going over my papers, I found a record of my application for my 1916 Medal, which must have been made some 20 years ago, which shows that I made 3 journeys to Cork in the beginning of July 1916:

viz: On Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday, spending the night on each occasion & going back again on the evening of my returning to Dublin. It was on the 3<sup>rd</sup> journey I took the 2 dispatches, one to T. Mc. Furtain & one to Mr. Healy of Cork, which I delivered on the Thursday morning.

I also have learned from my sister, Margaret, who lives in Walsinghampton that <sup>one</sup> the method used by my Brother Sean, ~~was~~ to send arms to Ireland was to pack them in a special suit case, but some were sent in...