

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21
No. **W.S. 415**

ROINN  COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. **W.S. 415**.....

Witness

Mrs. Eily O'Hanrahan O'Reilly,
12 Northumberland Ave.,
Dun Laoghaire.
Identity

Member of Cumann na mBan 1914 - .
Courier Dublin-Wexford 1916.

Subject

Fuller account of raids referred to in
her statement registered as W.S.270.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil

File No. **S.1354**.....

Form B.S.M. 2.

ORIGINAL

W.S. 415

Supplementary Statement
of

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913
BUIO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-24
No. W.S. 415

Mrs. O'Hanrahan O'Reilly,
12, Northumberland Avenue, Dunlaoghaire.

The raid I described in my statement as being the worst we ever had took place in August 1920. I can place it by the fact that my mother and my sister Cis were at Skerries at the time and Harry was on the run. It was while they were there and a very short time after the raid on our house that the burning of Balbriggan took place and they were dreading a visit from the Black and Tans in Skerries too. I got on the 'phone to the Grand Hotel which was in touch with my sister. When she came to the phone I told her all about the raid. On thinking over the raid afterwards, we came to the conclusion that what the military were looking for was not men on the run, but something definite in the form of a document or a piece of paper of some sort, because they examined minutely every article in every room of the house including the shop. They looked at the seams of the frocks, opened the boxes of cut plug, notepaper, and broke up the cigarettes and in fact anything where a piece of paper might be concealed. They pulled the bicycles to pieces, examined our handbags, took the piano asunder, turned up the carpets and searched every bit of the beds.

I should have mentioned that this raid took place on the night of the day that the post office clerk whom I referred to in my previous statement as supplying information had brought to the house a code message that had been sent through her post office in Phibsboro to all the police barracks in Ireland.

We had promised her that in no circumstances would we divulge her name. It was on that understanding she gave us the information, also she insisted that the code message which was in her handwriting should be copied by one of us and the paper returned to her. I copied it and my sister Maire copied it and later in the day Greg Murphy who was constantly coming for messages, copied it and brought it to Mick Collins. I know that because he returned twice that evening, the second time about 9 o'clock to say that Mick wanted to know who had supplied the information. We asked him was it important and were they acting on it. "Most important, but Mick wants to know where you got it from?" We said we could not tell him. He said with a laugh; "Suppose it was an order?" We said "Order or otherwise, we are not telling".

It must have been about 12 or 12.30 that night when the first raid occurred. We were only just in bed and I rushed to the window and asked the soldiers, who had arrived in armoured cars, to wait until we dressed. "They said they would blow in the door if we did not open at once?" This lot continued to search for an hour or so, when another lot came up in armoured cars also and rang at the door. I thought at first when I heard the ring it was some of our boys coming and that they would be caught in a trap, so I made to go to the door, but the officer who was attending to me stopped me and went himself. I was at the dining-room door and heard him talking to them. "When did you get word". "Only this minute, we were in bed". It was obvious that they had been rushed out of bed; their tunics were open and their rubber-soled shoes were not fastened. The officer told them to use their flash lamps, but they said they had not had time to charge them.

They joined in the search of the house and left no spot that they did not give attention to. This went on as I said until 6 o'clock. I found out afterwards that the whole area was held up and that people such as reporters and early morning workers were not allowed to pass. Blacquiere Bridge was guarded and a tank stationed at it. and at some other point. There were five or six armoured cars on the streets and the whole neighbourhood was in excitement.

We frequently discussed this raid and we often thought there must have been some leakage at headquarters when the information about this document was so quickly known to the Castle.

We were not as a rule told to whom the despatches left at our house were delivered, but we knew that this information was brought to Mick Collins from the fact that Greg Murphy told us that Mick had ordered us to disclose the source from which we got it. I don't know why he wanted it, unless perhaps, he wanted to utilise this contact to get more information on other matters. Besides Greg Murphy other couriers came to collect stuff but they did not tell us to whom they were bringing it. To tell the truth we never bothered to inquire; we were only anxious to perform the tasks allotted to us. The name of Eamonn Duggan was not mentioned as a person receiving these despatches.

The document that I said previously was delivered to us for safe keeping by Diarmuid O'Hegarty was in a large sealed envelope. It must have been given to us early in 1917 as we were not very long in the shop in N.C.Rd. when he brought it and we went there in November 1916. Evidently

it was very important, as Diarmuid was very nervy about it and said it would involve the lives of other persons as well as our/^{own}if found with us. We had always been told that we were to destroy any incriminating documents we had if we were threatened with a raid, so I asked him could we do so in the case of this one. He said no but we must keep it very safely. So we were wondering why they were not taking it away and very uneasy lest it should be discovered in one of the frequent raids on the house, so at last we asked Greg Murphy. He was very surprised when he heard we had that document and said they had been looking for it everywhere. He took it away but I don't know to whom he gave it.

I remember that a man called Tracy brought information from Broy. When he came first we did not like the look of him and we did not think he was to be trusted. We never, however, had any justification for our suspicions and we never heard that he did anything against us or the Volunteers. But he did not impress us very favourably. I do not remember that we copied any messages he brought. Some of them were verbal. On one occasion he brought a short verbal message 'to-night was the night' and the leading Volunteers were not to sleep in their houses that night or they would be arrested but we were told that Mick Collins said, when the message was given him, that he had better information and that the raid would not take place that night. He asked whom did we get the information from but we would not tell him. We were

right and the raid did take place that night and we afterwards heard that Mick Collins' digs were raided but he was not in them, he was somewhere nearby looking on at the raid.

Signed; Billy O'Hanrahan O'Reilly

Date; 17. 8. 50

Witness; Sri Crossin

Billy O'Hanrahan O'Reilly
17. 8. 50

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