

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21
No. W.S. 579

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 579

Witness

Sean Byrne,
131 Larkfield Grove,
Kimmage,
Dublin.

Identity.

Member of 'F' Company, 1st Battalion, Dublin Brigade,
1913-1916.

Subject.

Plans for cutting lines of communication
serving Dublin, Holy Week, and effecting
of plans, Easter Monday 1916.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. S.1851

Form B.S.M. 2

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STATEMENT BY MR. SEAN BYRNE

131 Larkfield Grove

Kimmage, Dublin

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I joined the Irish Volunteers at the inaugural meeting on 25th November 1913, at the Rotunda Rink, acted as steward and distributed enrolment forms at the meeting. Assisted at the formation of "F" Company 1st Battalion. Pearse Beasley was captain of the company; J. Shouldice 1st Lieut. and F. Lynch 2nd Lieut. I was appointed section commander at first company meeting.

Some time prior to Easter 1916 I was told by Tom Clarke to get particulars of all submarine cables in the vicinity of Dublin; the points of entry; guards, if any, and land lines communicating with them, with the object of cutting all communication with Britain. Shortly afterwards, and before inquiries were completed by me, I was informed by Tom Clarke that Dermot Lynch had got all the particulars required and not to proceed further.

On Wednesday of Holy Week I attended a meeting in Keating Branch Gaelic League Hall, North Frederick Street, presided over by Dermot Lynch. Others attending were Andy Fitzpatrick, J. Tyrrell, J. Twamley, Martin and George King, all employees of the Engineering Branch Post Office. We were told that a special squad was being formed to deal with communications and that specific tasks would be allotted to those present. Plans were to be prepared immediately for cutting communications so as to isolate the city. We were not told at this meeting that action had been decided upon but that we were to have plans prepared immediately. After some discussion the meeting adjourned until the following evening.

On Thursday evening at the same place, the meeting

reassembled and was attended by Thomas McDonagh, who informed us that we were going into action on the following Sunday at 6 p.m. and that we were to submit our plans for the isolation of the city. A plan was then hurriedly prepared and the following decided on: Andy Fitzpatrick to cut cross-channel cable from G.P.O. at point in Talbot Street; J. Tyrrell to cut cables at Dunlaoghaire and Blackrock; J. Twamley to cut cables and wires at Bray and Shankhill. Martin and George King to cut cables in Westland Row area.

We were informed that the Telephone Exchange, Crown Alley, was being attended to by G.H.Q. staff. I was detailed to cut the trunk telephone and telegraph lines at 7th Lock Bridge between Inchicore and Clondalkin.

On Good Friday I surveyed the position at Seventh Lock and made notes of equipment required for the job. We met at Liberty Hall that night and submitted our reports to James Connolly; we were supplied with such tools as pliers, hacksaws, axes, sledges and ropes which we brought to our homes to be kept in readiness.

We made a further survey on Saturday and noted all police private wires which were to be cut to isolate all barracks. F. Byrne was to do this job. We met again on Saturday night in Liberty Hall and completed arrangements.

On Sunday morning, on seeing the parade cancellation notice in the paper, I proceeded to Liberty Hall and there met members of the Executive Council.

I waited until the Executive Council meeting was over. I was then informed by Sean McDermott that the Rising had been postponed and that I was to cancel all "action orders" until further notice. I proceeded to Blackrock, Dunlaoghaire and Bray and contacted M. Tobin, J. Tyrrell, M. Higgins (Loughlinstown) and J. Kenny (Bray) and gave instructions

not to proceed with demolition work. I returned to Dunlaoghaire at about midnight.

On Monday morning I received an order from Dermot Hegarty to mobilise company at Blackhall Place. I went to Summerhill and left instructions for J. Costelloe, company mobiliser, to carry out the mobilisation. I then went to Liberty Hall and met James Connolly, who told me to join my battalion at Blackhall Place, and that the battalion officers there would decide on whatever demolition was to be carried out in the area.

I was instructed by Comdt. E. Daly to select a point near Liffey Junction for the cutting of the western trunks ^{(Athlone, Sligo, Galway).} I proceeded to Broome Bridge via Royal Canal and, with the help of a bridge demolition party in the area, cut down the pole and wires carrying the western trunks at Broome Bridge level crossing.

I afterwards returned to Coy. Headquarters at North King Street.

Signed: Jean Poyou?

Date: 12th Sept. 1951

Witness: Joseph Kearns Comdt

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