

**ORIGINAL**

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21  
NO. W.S. 626

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 626

**Witness**

John Donnelly,  
76 Pigeon House Road,  
Ringsend,  
Dublin.

**Identity.**

Member of 'G' Company, Fianna Scouts,  
1917-1918;

Member of 3rd Battalion, Dublin Brigade,  
1918 - .

**Subject.**

National activities, Dublin,  
1917-1921.

**Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.**

Nil

File No. S.1902

Form B.S.M. 2

ORIGINAL

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STATEMENT OF MR. JOHN DONNELLY.

76 Pigeon House Road, Ringsend, Dublin.

I joined "G" Company of the Fianna Scouts in 1917. Commandant Paddy Geraghty was in charge, although he was not a Commandant then.

While I was in the Fianna Scouts, we had active service on one occasion. We were taking part in a competition between all the Fianna Companies held at Rathfarnham, and we were out drilling for a signal flag, a Fianna badge and a pocket book. Liam Mellows was there and the two Houlihan's. On our way back from Rathfarnham, we marched seven abreast as we were told not to march in military formation. The R.I.C. came out of Rathfarnham Barracks and there was a scatter. Hugo MacNeill and his brother, Derry, and a third, whose name I don't remember, were arrested. We wanted to attack the Barracks and get them out, but Liam Mellows would not let us and we went back to our headquarters.

I was transferred to the Volunteers, "B" Company, 3rd Battalion, in 1918.

While in "B" Company, I took part in all operations up to 1920 when I was arrested and brought to Richmond Barracks. From there I was transferred to Kilmainham, where I met Fr. Dominic. He was doing solitary confinement at the time. Fr. Dominic would not be allowed to say Mass, but they brought in a priest from James' Street. We were all brought out every day for an

identification parade, in connection with Bloody Sunday, but they picked up no one there.

While in Kilmainham I remember James Mallon, the Frongoch Barber, being there. He complained one morning that the food was very bad. That evening he was taken out of his cell by an officer and two soldiers, and he got three days bread and water for complaining.

I was released from Kilmainham about the 6th March, 1921, and I reported back to my Company.

On the 14th March, I took part in the Brunswick Street ambush. On that day, Frank Flood and five others (including Moran, Brien, Thomas Whelan) were executed, and we went out that night for reprisals. We patrolled all our area and nothing happened. Captain Peadar O'Meara suggested to Seán Dolan to throw a bomb at College Street station. I could not say what happened after he threw the bomb, but I do know that Seán Dolan lost his leg and was taken to Mercer's hospital.

I learned afterwards that the ambulance men told them in Mercer's hospital, when they brought Seán Dolan in, that he was run over by a tram. I learned that, during the course of the matron's examination of his leg, she found the splinter of a bomb in his leg. She rang up Dublin Castle, and a charwoman overheard her conversation. The charwoman was the mother of Tom Caross, and she immediately told her son, Tom, who got in touch with Seán McBride, another member of "B" Company. Seán Dolan was taken out of Mercer's just an

hour before the Black and Tans came.

Immediately after the bomb throwing, two Crossley tenders and an armoured car proceeded down to 144 Brunswick Street. Tom Kelly, a brother of Alderman Kelly, came to 144 to tell us, and he was riddled with bullets. When the Tans arrived at 144, we attacked them with revolvers and grenades. Tom Trainor had an automatic pistol which jammed on him. The British officer in charge of the armoured car was a rugby player and, when he saw Tom trying to fix his automatic, he jumped out of the armoured car, gave him a rugby tackle, brought him into the armoured car and took him to Dublin Castle, a prisoner. He was sentenced to death, and was hanged, I think, sometime in April. We also lost Volunteer Barney Hanlon of Dundalk and Volunteer Leo Fitzgerald. Barney Hanlon died on his way to the hospital. I was badly wounded myself. I got four bullets into me and was unconscious for twenty-four hours. I had two operations.

I was transferred to Mountjoy hospital where I met Arthur Griffith, Professor <sup>Eden</sup> McNeill, Mr. Duggan and Micheál Staines. Two of them, I think, were signatories of the Treaty - Arthur Griffith and Duggan. I had several talks with Arthur Griffith and Professor McNeill. They asked me for information as to how things were going on outside, and told me to keep my chin up, that everything would be alright.

I was transferred then over to "C" wing of the prison (Mountjoy) to the cell next to General Seán MacEoin. At that period there were four of us kept together, and we were known as the "Big Four" - General Seán MacEoin.

Frank Carty, Fianna Fáil T.D., Christie Carbery and myself. I had already been tried and sentenced to death. The reason we were called the "Big Four" was that two of us, Seán MacEoin and myself, had been sentenced to death, and the other two, Carty and Carbery, had been sentenced to long terms of imprisonment.

From Mountjoy I was brought to Dublin Castle, under a heavy escort. I was tried by general courtmartial in the City Hall and sentenced to death. There was no recommendation of mercy for me. I am handing in to the Bureau a copy of a statement in connection with the courtmartial. I was tried for murder of Cadet Francis Farrell and Section Leader Bird.

There was a Sergeant of the Military Police there who took a note of all condemned prisoners that had been sentenced. He said he was going to make a book of it. Regarding one item that was in it, he told me that when Fr. Dominic had been brought to Dublin Castle, a British officer slapped him in the face and called him, "B-----{".

On the night before my trial, I was brought to the City Hall in Dublin Castle and put in an underground cell where I could not sleep, with the rats.

After my trial, I was brought back to Mountjoy again where I was doing twenty-two hours solitary confinement. General MacEoin was tried the following Monday - I was tried on a Saturday - and was also sentenced to death. He informed me one day on exercise that Michael Collins was in touch with Engineers to see

if they could run a tunnel from the canal side of the prison to the exercise ground in the prison; but some obstacles arose on the crossing of the canal and they had to cancel it. He also told me that Michael Collins was trying other means for a rescue.

On the day of the attempted rescue of Seán MacEoin, we heard the shooting. We learned then that there was an attempt to rescue MacEoin and that the sentry had been shot. Black and Tans were running in seven's everywhere, and a double lock was put on our cells - the master lock. After that, all our cells were searched and each prisoner was searched personally. Even a patch on his clothes was torn off, to see if it concealed any documents. Our visitors and exercises were stopped I think for a few days until things died down. After a few days, everything went normal again. We got our parcels and our usual exercises, two hours per day.

I was in the cell next to MacEoin. He told me on exercise that one of the Chief Warders, Mr. Breslin, had smuggled in two revolvers, one for MacEoin and one for me, and on the morning that we were to be executed, we were to die fighting sooner than be hanged. We were just getting transferred to the condemned cell when the Truce came.

Another incident I remember was when we went on hunger strike. At this time, MacEoin had been released and the Truce was on. They stopped our parcels and we declared a hunger strike which we ran for seven days I think. While we were on hunger strike, the liason

officer, Emmet Dalton, came to Mountjoy to see what was wrong. He got in touch with Headquarters, and we got our parcels back and the freedom of the prison on the undertaking that we would not escape.

During this time, I could have escaped with Paddy Rigney, but I was told not to, as I had already given an undertaking. The authorities said they would not release me until the Treaty had been ratified by both parties. Jimmy Hunt, who was our Camp Commandant, got in touch with Emmet Dalton. Dalton assured our Camp Commandant that, at the general release, I would be released with the remainder. I was not released until the Treaty was ratified by both Governments. It was after Christmas, coming into the New Year, when I was released.

I have a photograph at home of myself, Seán MacBain, Tom Flood and Tom Garty.

SIGNED

*John Donnelly*  
 (John Donnelly)

DATE 14<sup>th</sup> December 1951

14th December 1951.

WITNESS

*J. Kearns Comdt.*  
 (J. Kearns, Comdt.)

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1013-21

BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1013-21

No. W.S. 626

CHARGE SHEET NO.1.

The accused JOHN DONNELLY of 26 Holles Street, Dublin, civilian, is charged with :-

Reg. 67 R.O.I.R.

Committing a crime within the meaning of Regulation 67 of the Restoration of Order in Ireland Regulations, that is to say, MURDER,

In Dublin, Ireland, on the 14th day of March, 1921 feloniously, wilfully and of his malice aforethought did kill and murder Cadet Francis Joseph Farrell.

*John J. Heath, Major R.C.I.*

Commanding Detachment 1st Battalion King's Own (Rifles) Regiment.

DUBLIN  
21st May, 1921.

TO BE TRIED BY GENERAL COURT-MARTIAL.

*(sgcd) G. F. Boyd*

Major-General.  
Commanding Dublin District.

DUBLIN.  
21st May, 1921.

*Commanding Officer*



CHARGE SHEET NO. 2

The accused, JOHN DOWNEY of 26, Holles Street, Dublin a civilian, is charged with:-

Reg. 67  
I.O.I.R.

Committing a crime within the meaning of Regulation 67 of the Restoration of Order in Ireland Regulations, that is to say, MURDER,

that he,

At Dublin, Ireland, on 15th March 1921, feloniously, wilfully and of his malice aforethought did kill and murder Cadet Bernard Joseph Leonard Beard.

*Joseph P. Health*

Commanding Detachment 1st Battalion King's Own (Rifles) Regiment.

DUBLIN.  
21st May, 1921.

TO BE TRIED BY GENERAL COURT-MARTIAL

*Joseph C. Boyle*

Major-General.  
Commanding Dublin District.

DUBLIN  
21st May, 1921.

STATEMENT

2nd Witness

Sapper ..... states:-

I am an expert Map Maker.

I was for four years previous to the War employed in designing work.. I have made a map of Great Brunswick Street, Dublin and the neighbourhood. I say that the map is drawn to scale and is accurate. Previous to making the map I went over the actual ground. The map now produced and shown to me is the map I made.

(Signed) .....

Sapper.

3rd Witness

T/Cadet ..... Aux. Div. R.I.C. being duly sworn, states:-

On the 14th March, 1921, I went out with a party from the Castle to raid 144 Great Brunswick Street. We had two Crossley Tenders and one armoured car. The tenders led the way and the armoured car followed. We went along Dame Street past Trinity and in to Great Brunswick Street. Just after we passed a point where Sandwith Street crosses Great Brunswick Street and on approaching No. 144 fire was opened on the leading tender from all directions. I was in this tender at the back on the right-hand side. Cadet --- was in the same tender in front next the driver. The fire lasted about 10 minutes.

On the fire ceasing I went with Cadet --- and saw 5 Cadets on the road by the tender, who had been hit. 4 civilians had also been hit. 2 civilians were lying on the pavement, one was on the doorstep of, I think, 145 but I am not sure of the number. The fourth was lying on another doorstep with his head towards the door and his feet towards the roadway. The accused now present is this fourth man. He was lying on his stomach and his head was turned. The street was badly lighted. I had an electric torch, I flashed it into his face. I saw his face clearly. I saw a revolver lying by his left hand - a matter of inches. I picked it up and examined it. It was loaded in all 5 chambers. I extracted the rounds, 3 were live and 2 had been fired. I threw away the fired rounds. The revolver now produced to me is the one I picked up. It has "English Bull-dog" engraved on the back sight. The 3 live rounds now produced fit the pistol. I believe them to be the rounds I extracted. I put the revolver in a sand bag, also the 3 live rounds, and later on I turned them over to the proper officer at

Dublin Castle. I did not examine the accused as to his injuries. I can't swear to it but I think he was wearing a dark overcoat. All the wounded cadets and the four dead or wounded civilians were conveyed to King George V. Hospital. I did not actually see the accused put into the transport.

I escorted two wounded Cadets in an ambulance to King George V. Hospital. The accused was not in my ambulance. I did not see the accused again.

(Signed).....  
T/C. Aux. Div. R.I.C.

The accused declines to cross-examine this witness.

4th Witness

D.I. 3 ..... Aux. Div. R.I.C. being  
duly sworn, states:-

On the night of the 14th March, 1921, at 8 p.m. I was detailed to proceed to No. 144 Great Brunswick Street to do a raid. The party was 2 tenders, an armoured car and 16 Cadets. We left the Castle, the two tenders leading and the armoured car following. We went along Dame Street by Trinity into Great Brunswick Street. Just after passing the point where Sandwith Street crosses Great Brunswick Street heavy fire was directed on us from the doorway of No. 144, 145 and the upstairs windows of 144. We were also fired at from our front and from the roof of houses opposite. The firing lasted about 10 minutes, the first five minutes the fire was intensive.

When the firing ceased I found that 5 Cadets had been hit and also 4 civilians killed or wounded. I phoned to King George V. Hospital for an ambulance. 3 wounded Cadets were then put into one of the tenders and it left for King George V. Hospital. I entered No. 144 and found it empty. I came out. I looked at the dead or wounded civilians, one was lying close to the railings of 145 - 2 were close to the kerb and one man was lying on the top step of either 147 or 148 I cannot say which. The accused now present is the man I saw lying on the top step. Another Cadet was with me. He had an electric torch which he turned into the accused's face. It was a dark night and the street was badly lighted. He was lying on his stomach with his face turned over. I saw his face. His feet were towards the Street and his head towards the front door. He had a revolver lying at his left side, quite close to his left hand. The revolver now produced is the one he had. I recognise it by the words "English Bull-dog" engraved on the top of the back sight. The Cadet with me picked up the revolver. He examined it - I saw him do so - it was loaded in five chambers. I saw him eject the cartridges, 2 rounds had been fired and 3 were intact. The

6th Witness

Capt ..... R.A.M.C. being duly sworn, states:-

On the evening of the 14th March, 1921, I was at King George V. Hospital. On receipt of a telephone request an ambulance was sent to Great Brunswick Street. An ambulance arrived from Great Brunswick Street with four wounded men. I was in the Hall when they arrived, with other Medical Officers. We took the worst cases to the operating theatre - there were two serious cases in that ambulance. Cadet Farrell was wounded on the right side of the back and had another wound on the left side under the arm, about the base of the ribs. I formed the opinion that the back wound was the wound of entrance and the side wound was the wound of exit. No operation was performed. He died in the Operating Theatre. The other man - Section Leader Beard (Aux. Div) was wounded on the right side of the head above his right eye. He had another wound in the right side of his neck at the back. Both wounds were caused by the same bullet. The bullet entered from in front and came out at the back. An operation was performed and he was transferred to the Wards. He died about 24 hours later as the result of his injuries. The other two men who were brought in at the same time were put to bed and are still living. Both of these men were suffering from gun-shot wounds. We also received the same night one Cadet and four civilians all suffering from gun-shot wounds. Two of the civilians were brought in dead. One of the remaining civilians was taken to the Operating Theatre. He had 3 wounds in the region of the right hip and one gun-shot wound on the right side of the chest and another just under the left arm-pit. He was operated upon but died later. The remaining civilian is still alive (he is the man now present) The other is also alive.

(Signed) ..... Capt. R.A.

The accused declines to cross-examine this witness.

7th Witness

Cadet

Aux. Division R.I.C.

being sworn states : -

On the night of the 14th March, 1921 I went out to raid 144 Great Brunswick Street. There were 2 tenders of Aux. Div. and an armoured car in rear. We reached Great Brunswick Street at about 8 p.m. I was in the leading tender in the back and Cadet Farrell and Section Leader Beard were in the same tender. When we had just reached 144 fire was opened on us from all sides. I saw Cadet Farrell and Section Leader Beard hit and fall out of the tender. At that time none of the party in the 2 tenders and the armoured car had fired. We replied to the fire. The firing lasted about 10 minutes.

When it eased off we searched the neighbourhood. Three other Cadets were <sup>also</sup> wounded at the same time as Farrell and Beard. Some Civilians were also hit. The ambulance arrived and I saw Farrell and Beard put in. I escorted them in the tender to King George V. Hospital. I saw them taken into the Hospital. I identified both of them when they were lying dead in the mortuary.

(Signed) Cadet

Aux. Div. R.I.C.

The accused declines to cross-examine this witness.

8th Witness

T/Cadet (Aux. Div.) R.I.C. being sworn states : -

I went out on the night of the 14th March, 1921 to raid 144 Great Brunswick Street. We arrived about 8 o'clock it was just getting dark. There were two tenders and an armoured car. I was in the body of the leading tender.

Just as we were slowing up at 144 fired was opened on us from several directions. Farrell and Beard were in my tender. Beard was next to me. He was hit and fell out of the tender. Farrell was hit too and he also fell out of the tender. We replied to the fire. This was after Farrell and Beard had been hit and fallen out of the tender. The fire lasted about 10 minutes. When the firing ceased we searched the neighbourhood. 3 other Cadets in my tender were also hit at the same time as Farrell and Beard. Several civilians were found to be hit after the firing ceased.

The ambulance came and I saw Farrell and Beard put into it. I escorted the ambulance to King George V. Hospital in a tender. I saw them taken into the Hospital.

The rest of the wounded were then collected and taken to the same hospital.

(Signed) T/Cadet,  
Aux. Div. R.I.C.

The accused declines to cross-examine this witness.



9th Witness

T/Cadet

Aux. Div. R.I.C. being sworn states :

I went out to raid 144 Great Brunswick Street on the night of the 14th March 1921. There were two tenders and an armoured car in rear. I was in the leading Tender, Farrell and Beard were in the same tender. When we reached 144 we were fired on. We replied to the fire. It lasted about 10 minutes. When it was over I saw Farrell and Beard lying in the roadway wounded. After a while the ambulance arrived and I saw Farrell and Beard put into it.

I escorted the ambulance in a tender to King George V. Hospital. 3 other Cadets were also hit and some civilians. These were also taken to the same Hospital. I saw Farrell and Beard taken into the Hospital.

(Signed) T/Cadet,  
Aux. Div. R.I.C.

is witness.

Supplementary Summary of Evidence in the case of  
JOHN DONNELLY OF

10th Witness

Staff Sgt. being duly sworn states: -

I am Armourer Sgt to the 1/Lancs Fusiliers and have been armourer for the last 6 years. Before that I was employed with Messrs Vickers and Son & Maxim Ltd.

I have examined a Bull Dog Revolver, being the revolver now produced to me. I identify the Revolver produced as being the one I examined. It has the marks "4" and "6" on the Chamber. It is not an army issue. It is in perfect working order. Its bore is .450 and it will take service ammunition. The chamber is fouled and the barrel is fouled. The fouling in both cases is superficial. If 2 rounds had been fired through it since it was last cleaned, that would account for this fouling. When I examined it, it had not been recently fired. Certainly not for a month.

The 3 live rounds of revolver ammunition now produced to me are the same as 3 rounds which I have already examined. I identify them as being the same. They are .450 calibre. They are none of them Government issue.

At one time pistols of the same pattern as that produced were, to my own knowledge issued to the Police in London and to the D.M.P. The revolver is not a modern pattern. This pattern is not made now.

(Signed) S/Sgt.

Cross-examination declined by the accused.

The accused being duly warned states; -

"I do not wish to make a statement. I have just instructed a solicitor."

C E R T I F I C A T E

I certify that the foregoing Summary of Evidence has been taken down by me in the presence of the accused in accordance with the provisions of the Army Act and the Rules of Procedure made thereunder and that Rules of Procedure 4 (c) (d) and (e) have been complied with.

Taken down by me at His Majesty's Prison, Mountjoy, on the 28th day of April, 1921.

(Signed) .....

Major

C E R T I F I C A T E

I Certify that the foregoing Summary of Evidence has been taken down by me in the presence of the accused in accordance with the provisions of the Army Act and the Rules of Procedure made thereunder and that Rules of Procedure 4 (c) (d) and (e) have been complied with.

Taken down by me at His Majesty's Prison, Mountjoy, on the 12th day of May, 1921.

(Signed) .....

Major. A.L.O.

June 7 1842

John Donnelly

Sent to Death from Louing

his ~~country~~ Ireland

and I wish to say that if I do  
get out of here I will do the same

when Ireland want me come up I

had 9 lives I would be willing say

them down one but one for the case

God save Ireland say the hear

god save Ireland say we all

whiter on the staffe high

or the battle field oh what matter

when for ever Dear Wee  
pall

Let me carry your cross

For Ireland's Lord

John Donnelly

Seyn Doyyide

Sent to Death  
for ~~being~~ <sup>being</sup> fighting  
for his country  
and if I do get out as  
I know I have no hopes  
I would willing do the  
same again to free  
my country to God where  
But I hope to God where  
my time comes that sum one  
will fill my place in the ranks

Seyn Donnelly

CI 421 Mount of Zion Prisoner

God Save Ireland  
from the Black & Tans