W.S. 669

ORIGINAL

ROINN COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913–21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 669

Witness

Micheal S. O MathGhamhna,
5 Raon Naomh Mhuire,
Bothar Druimeanaigh,
Baile Atha Cliath.

Identity.

Son-in-law of Peadar Bracken.

Subject.

Comment on

Professor Liam O'Briain's book "Cuimhni Cinn".

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. S.1963

Form B.S.M. 2

ORIGINAL

W. C. Galway
17-4-52

Dear Colonel

I don't know if the enclosed screed would interest your archives. In my book "Cuimní Cinn" I gave a short - very short - account of the scrap in Tullamore a month before Easter Week in which Peadar Bracken & Jimmy Brennan were engaged. I got this letter from a son in law of Bracken's who knows Irish well, whoever he is, saying I was all wrong and giving a full account of the affair. In fact it confirms my version. Maybe you will think it worth keeping.

Good luck

Liam O Briain

ORIGINAL

5 Raon Naoin Mhuire,
Bóthar Dhuin Lomaig,
(5 Drumajo Drive, Drumagh Rd.)
Béal Feirste.
9/12/51

A Dhuine Uasail,

Do léigeas le déanaí "Cuimhní Cinn – Cuid 1" Cuimhní an Éiri Amach, agus do spreag an Cúntas atá agat ann, ar ar tárla sa Tulaigh Mhór, mé féin scríobhadh cúpla cé nach bfuil aithne agam ort. Tá aithne mhaith agam ar Peadar Ó Breacáin – Sé sean mo mhná-céile é – agus, cé nach fear beathaisnéise é, is eol dom, ón méid a chuala mé uaidh ó am go ham, nach bfuil an Cúntas atá it' leabhar sé ceart.

Ar an gcéad dul síos bhí Peadar Ó Breacáin an t-oifigeach Sinn Féin i gCumann na Tulaigh Mhóire, agus ní hamháin sin, ach do bhí sé ina oifigeach Ceannais ar Bhrigáid Dé Luain – do bhí an Tulach Mhór sa Bhrigáid-Ceantar san. Do thug Pádraig Mac Piarais an Ceim sin dó i bhfómhar a 1915 i Scoil Lanna agus d'iunis dó go rabhas féin éirí amach go luath. Iordhuigh sé dó gach Roinnéir a déanamh féin mar a thaibhsíos an Rabhadh dó, agus Cinneadar ar an Sagas Rabhadh a úsáidfaoi.

Mar sin leis an dearóid a tárla i Halla Pearáin an

na n-Óglaí sa Tulaigh Mhóir timcheall mí Roimh an Sirí Amach
Seaán a tárla ná gur tug daoscar-sluagh de mhuintir an
baile ann á raibh a gcuid fear i n-arm Sasana agus
mar sin — ionnsaí fén halla mar a raibh scata Óglaí
agus baill de Chumann na mban ag cimeadh airgid
a bailigeadh ag Cluiche S.A.A. an lá roimhe sin. Do thionlaic
Óglaí darb'ainm Seosamh Wrafter agus Peadar Ó Breacáin
na mná abaile, agus, ar bhfilleadh dóibh ar an halla,
tug an dream naimhdeil fogha fúta agus scaoil Peadar ta
dá urchar san aer chun iad a choimeád ar gcúl. B'amhsin sin
a bhuig an R.I.C. isteach san halla agus mhair d'fhéachadar
le na h-Óglaigh a raibh sé, d'fhuir pé airm a bhí aca a glacadh, nes
do scaoil Peadar ceithre urchair — an méid a bhí fágtha san mhuá
gunna — leo agus gonadh sár-sinn (níor gonadh an Ghaire, gus
cé go raibh sé, féin). Níor gabhadh aon fear de chuid na
n-Óglaí agus Ruaig Peadar na cosa dhán leis 7 d'éirigh leis
ar gunna a choimeád cé go raibh sé gonta ón leasaí a
fuair sé ó bhaoi an R.I.C. Nuair d'éalaigh sé ón halla
thoimsaigh an dream a bhí amuigh arís é. Sin sirim an scéil
Sin. Is dócha gur bhog duine a chuala trácht Riain ar an gam
dtaobh sin, ach más fíor a ndeirtear sé leabhar — "d'fhéadfaí inn,
a rá gurb'ann sin sa Tulaigh Mhóir a céadchéad urchar
in Sirí Amach a 1916" — mar sin go raibh tábhacht ó thaobh
Seaán agus bhaint leis an dtaobh agus ó bhí Peadar Ó Breacáin an

a ĉoiĉ na hUrdair an lá seo, ba ĉóir do duine, a
ḟagann air féin Cúntas ar an dtroid sin a ĉur i gcló,
ceiliúrfaidh na fennie a tabhairt dó.

Ní fíor ach oiread go
deacair leadar go bhféadfaidh Cluaiḋ agus gur fan sin ar feadh
tríosa sa gCampa ag Ceann Muige. Cuaid sé ar a coimeád,
agus srois tig Muintir Mic Cormaic i n Droim Raiḃiní
cúpla lá ṫréis na troda ag an halla, agus d'fan sinn go
bhfuair sé ordú ón bPiarsaiḋ dul ann na Seactaine Naomta
go Baile Átha Cliaṫ amach Domnaiḋ Casca ar a 7pm Seosamh
Mac Donnchuda an teachtaire a tug an t-ordú dó. (Coicís
roimhe sin fuair sé teachtareacht ón bPiarsaiḋ – bean Séaines
a tug dó é – á ráḋ leis a ḃeiṫ ullamh.) Do ṫionóil sé Chumann
d'Oifigiġ na bhFiannaḋ an oíche sin i dtuig Mhic Cormaic agus
deineadar gaé Réiḋteaċ i gcóir an Éirí Amach. An lá dár
gcionn, dóme an Ċéasta, chuaid sé féin agus Séamus Ó
Braonáin (Leifteanant Complaicta na Tulaigḋe Móire) go dtí an
Tulaċ Mór Ċúil na hÓglaigḋ a tionsú i gcóir an Éirí Amach.

Ar ndóigḋ níl aḋ cráma an scéil agam
anuas, dá mbeadsam gur Soldier ón méid atá scriobtha agam
go hiomlán sé bunós-cionn leis an gCúntas seo i gCumann Cúil,
agus tá súil agam go gceartóchar do Cúntas-sa má
Chuirfear an tarna ḋíol air an bhabhar.

Ba mian liom a ráḋ gur toirn an

leabhar go mórliom agus creideamh do saothar leat. Tá súil agam go maithfe tú dom an litir seo a scríobhadh chugat. Ní déanfaimn é cor ar bith ach amháin go bfuil Peadar Ó Braonáin ina bhaile fós, buíochas le dia, agus dá Chomhsin, go mbfuaireas duit ceart an scéil d'fagháil ach scríobhaí Cuige Sulas Cumann an leabhar iglé.

Is mise, le meas,

Micheál S. Ó Maoileoinn.

5 Raon Naomh Muire,
Bóthar Druim Eanaigh,
(5 St. Mary's Drive,
Drimnagh Road)
Baile Átha Cliath.

9/12/'51.

A Dhúine Uasail,

To léigheas le déanaí "Cuimhní Cinn - Cuid 1 - Cuimhní an Éirí Amach", agus to spreag an cúntas atá agat ann, ar ar thárla sa Tulaigh Mhóir, mé chun scríobhadh chugat cé nách bhfuil aithne agam ort. Tá aithne mhaith agam ar Pheadar Ó Breacáin - 'sé athair mo mhná-chéile é - agus, cé nach fear béalscaoilte é, is eol dom, óh méid a chuala mé uaidh ó am to h-am, nách bhfuil an cúntas atá id' leabhar-sa ceart.

Ar an gcéad dul síos b'é Peadar Ó Breacáin an t-oifigeach sinnsir in gComplacht na Tulaighe Móire, agus ní h-amháin sin, ach do bhí sé 'na oifigeach ceannais ar Bhriogáid Átha Luain - do bhí an Tulach Mhór sa Bhriogáid Cheanntar san. To thug Pádraig Mac Piarais an chéim sin dó in bhFóghar a 1915 in Scoil Éanna agus d'innis dó go rabhthas chun éirí amach go luath. D'órduigh sé dhó gach réidhteach a dhéanamh chun éirí amach 'na Cheanntar féin nuair a tabharfaoi an rabhadh dhó, agus chinneadar ar an saghas rabhaidh a úsáidfaoi.

Maidir leis an dtroid a thárla i halla na n-Óglach sa Tulaigh Mhóir timcheall mí roimh an Éirí Amach, séard a thárla ná gur thug daoscar-shuagh de mhuinntir an bhaile - mná a raibh a gcuid fear in n-arm Shasana agus mar sin - ionnsaí fé'n halla mar a raibh scata Óglach agus baill de Chumann na mBan ag comhaireamh airgid a bailigheadh ag

cluiche G.A.A. an lá roimhe sin. To dhionnlaic óglach darbh ainm Seosamh Wrafter agus Peadar Ó Breacáin na mná abhaile, agus, ar bhfilleadh dhóibh ar an halla, thug an dream naimhdiúil fogha fútha agus scaoil Peadar dhá urchar san aer chun iad a choiméad ar gcúl. B'annsin a bhrúigh an R.I.C. isteach san halla agus nuair d'fhéachadar le na h-Óglaigh a rannsú, d'fhonn pé airm a bhí aca a ghlachadh, do scaoil Peadar cheithre urchair - an méid a bhí fágtha san gunna - leo agus goineadh Sáirsint (níor goineadh an Cigire, cé go raibh sé in láthair). Níor gabhadh aon fhear de chuid na n-Óglach agus rug Peadar na cosa slán leis agus d'éirigh leis an gunna a choiméad cé go raibh sé gonta ó'n léasadh a fuair sé ó bataí an R.I.C. Nuair dhéalaigh sé ó'n halla d'ionnsaigh an dream a bhí amuigh arís é. Sin éirim an scéil sin. Is dócha gur beag duine a chuala tráct riamh ar an dtroid sin, ach má's fíor a ndeirir sa leabhar - "D'fhéadfaoi a rá gurbh annsin sa Tulaigh Mhóir a ceadchaitheadh urchar in Éirí Amach a 1916" - measaim go raibh tabhacht ó thaoibh staire ag baint leis an dtroid agus ó b'é Peadar Ó Breacáin a chaith na h-urchair an lá san, ba chóir do dhuine, a thógann air féin cúntas ar an dtroid sin a chur in gcló, comhthrom na Féinne a thabhairt dó.

Ní fíor ach oiread go ndeachaidh Peadar go Baile Atha Cliath agus gur fhan ann ar feadh míosa sa gCampa ag Ceann Muighe. Chuaidh sé ar a choiméad, agus shrois digh mhuinntir Mhic Chormaic in nDroim Raithní cúpla lá t'réis na troda ag an halla, agus d'fhan ann go bhfuair sé órdú ó'n bPiarsach Diardaoin na Seachtaine Naomhtha go rabhthas chun éirí amach Domnach Cásca ar a 7 p.m. Seosamh Mac Aonghusa an teachtaire a thug an t-órdú dhó. (Coicís roimhe sin fuair sé teachtaireacht o'n bPiarsach - Liam Staines a thug dó é - á rádh leis a bheith ullamh).

Do thionáil sé cruinniú d'Oifigigh na Briogáide an oiche sin in dtigh Mhic Chormaic agus dheineadar gach réidhteach i gcóir an Éirí Amach. An lá dá'r gcionn, Aoine an Chéasta, chuaidh sé féin agus Seamus Ó Braonáin (Leifteannant Complachta na Tulaighe Móire) go dtí an Tulach Mhór chun na h-Óglaigh a thionnsú i gcóir an Éirí Amach.

Ar ndóigh níl ach cnámha an scéil agam annso, ach measaim gur soiléir o'n méid atá scrióbhtha agam go bhfuil sé bun-ós-cionn leis an gcúntas agá in g"Cuimhní Cinn", agus tá súil agam to gceartóchair do chúntas-sa má chuirfear an tarna chló ar an leabhar.

Ba mhaith liom a rádh gur thaithn an leabhar go mór liom agus traosluighim do shaothar leat. Tá súil agam go maithfe tú dhom an litir seo a scríobhadh chugat. Ní dhéanfainn é cor ar bith ach amháin go bhfuil Peadar Ó Breacáin 'na bheathadh fós, búiochas le Dia, agus dá chionn sin, go mb'fhuiriste dhuit ceart an scéil d'fhaghál ach scriobhadh chuige sular chireadh an leabhar i gcló.

Is mise, le meas

(Sigh). Micheál S.Ó Mathghamna

Translation from Irish.

5 Raon Naomh Muire
Bóthar Druim Eanaigh
(5,St.Mary's Drive, Drimnagh Rd.)
Baile Átha Cliath.

9.12.51.

Dear Sir,

I recently read part I. of "Cuimhne Cinn - Recollections of the Rising", and your account of what happened at Tullamore has prompted me to write to you even though I am not acquainted with you. I know Peadar Bracken very well - he is my father-in-law - and even though he is not a man who talks too much, I know from what I have heard from him from time to time that the account in your book is not accurate.

In the first place Peadar Bracken was the senior officer in the Tullamore Company, and not only that but he was Commanding officer of the Athlone brigade - Tullamore was in that brigade area. Pádraig Pearse gave him that rank in the autumn of 1915 in Scoil Éanna, and told him that a Rising was to take place at an early date. He instructed him to make every preparation to go into action in his own area when the signal was given him, and they decided on the type of signal he would receive.

As regards the fight that occurred in the Volunteer hall in Tullamore about a month before the Rising, what really happened was that a number of the rabble of the town - wives whose husbands were in the British army and people like that - attacked the hall where there were a number of Volunteers and members of the Cumann na mBan counting money which had been collected at a G.A.A. game the day before. Joseph Wrafter, a Volunteer, together with Peadar Bracken, escorted the women home, and on returning to the hall a hostile crowd attacked them and Peadar discharged two shots in the air to keep them

back. It was then that the R.I.C. came in to the hall, and when they tried to search the Volunteers with a view to taking any arms they had, Peadar discharged four shots at them ; all he had left in the gun - wounding a Sergeant (the Inspector was not wounded although he was present). None of the Volunteers was arrested. Peadar escaped and he succeeded in keeping his gun even though he was hurt from the batoning which he got from the R.I.C. When he escaped from the hall the crowd outside again attacked him. That is the substance of what happened. I suppose that few people have ever heard of that fight but if what you state in the book is true, viz. ....it could be said that it was in Tullamore that the first shot of the Rising of 1916 was fired .....", I think that there was an historical importance attached to the fight, and since it was Peadar Bracken that fired the shots that day, I think the person who takes on himself the task of publishing the story of that fight should do justice to Mr Bracken.

It is not true either that Peadar went to Dublin and that he stayed there for a month in a camp at Kimmage. He went "on the run" and he reached McCormack's house in Drumraney a few days after the fight in the hall and he remained there until he got an order from Pearse on the Holy Thursday that the Rising was to take place on Easter Sunday at 7 p.m. It was Joseph McGuinness who brought the order to him. (A fortnight before that he got a message from Pearse - it was Liam Staines who brought it to him - telling him to be ready). He summoned a meeting of the officers of the Brigade that night in McCormack's house and they made every preparation for the Rising. The day after that, Good Friday, he and James Brennan (Lieutenant in the Tullamore Company) went to Tullamore to prepare them for the Rising.

Indeed I have only the bones of the story here but I think it is clear from what I have written that it is at variance with the account given in "Cuimhne Cinn", and I hope that if a second edition of the book is published, that the account will be corrected.

I would like to say that I liked the book very much and I congratulate you on your work. I hope you will forgive me for writing this letter to you. I would not have written it were it not that Peadar Bracken is still alive, thanks be to God, and for that reason it would have been easy for you to get the correct story by writing to him before you had the book printed.

Yours sincerely,

Micheál S.Ó Mathghamhna.