

W. S. 677
ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21
No. W.S. 677

ROINN  COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 677

Witness

Patrick McHugh,
33 Barrow St.,
Ringsend,
Dublin.

Identity.

O/C. Dundalk Fianna Eireann, 1911 - ;
Lieut. Irish Volunteers, Dundalk, 1916.

Subject.

- (a) National activities, Dundalk, 1911-1916;
- (b) Dundalk, Easter Week 1916.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

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Form B.S.M. 2

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Statement by Patrick McHugh,

33, Barrow Street, Dublin.

I was born in 1894 in Dundalk, County Louth. My parents were natives of County Monaghan and both were born and reared on small holdings around Inniskeen. They were native Irish speakers, but I regret to say did not realise the gift they possessed and spoke in Irish only when they wanted to have private conversation.

My father was a nationalist, but if he was, my mother was still better in that regard and loved her country and its patriots intensely. Both were musical, my father playing the violin and mother the concertina. Thus, I might say, I was reared on Irish folk music and song. My home was a meeting place for Gaels in the young days of the Gaelic League so it would have been unnatural if I, when able, would not have been associated with the Gaelic revival in Ireland, particularly in Dundalk. At ten years of age I was playing a violin and taking part in Feiséanna and Gaelic League concerts, music, singing and dancing.

At sixteen years of age I became a member of Sinn Fein and a monitor in Friary National School, but at seventeen I was forced by the Manager of the School to choose between teaching as a profession and Fianna Eireann which I started in Dundalk in 1911 after a visit of Countess Markievicz on the occasion of the Manchester Martyrs Commemoration. I chose the Fianna and as a result started as an apprentice Fitter in the Great Northern Railway on 1st January, 1912.

The membership of Sinn Fein was indeed very small, not numbering more than twenty. Its members were looked upon as cranks and dreamers, whose ideals were hopeless and impossible

of fulfilment. Although not a military organisation it acted as an outlet for the feelings of those who favoured force as a means towards the end and covered their thoughts.

Thus in Dundalk it kept before the minds of the people the memory of Ireland's patriot dead by the organising of concerts and lectures to commemorate the Manchester Martyrs, Robert Emmett, etc. Its meetings were always fully reported in the local national paper (Examiner) owned and printed by Mr. Patrick Matthews, a genuine nationalist. Through this paper and Mr. Matthews's great help it preached the policy of self reliance and the necessity that the youth of Ireland should organise to free our native land. Its preaching, truly, did not have much effect as Louth was in the hands of what can only be described as two factions, the supporters of Tim Healy and those of the United Irish League. The latter banded together in the A.O.H.

The county was divided into bitter camps and many ugly clashes took place between rival parties at election times not to mention the names they called each other and in the same breath and act fooling the people that they were working in the interest of Ireland.

The bitterness did not end there as it was brought into local matters in Dundalk Urban Council elections and was always on display at Council meetings. The A.O.H. or "Molly Maguires", as Healy called them, had always a majority on Council and were, therefore, always in a position to place their own friends in all good positions on Council which they did unashamedly, and thereby controlled affairs of town. Their Press was the Dundalk Democrat, owned and edited by their members, and its policy was not one that would free our

country of its binding chain. It ridiculed and belittled the efforts of all but the Party it represented, condemning the 1916 Rising, representing participants as murderers and calling for justice, meaning their punishment, for daring to oppose their Lords and friends.

In 1910 Paddy Hughes led a small band of men - ten in all - to oppose and obstruct the proclamation of George V. as King of England and Ireland, etc.

The ceremony consisted of the King's High Sheriff reading the said Proclamation and concluded with the hoisting of the Union Jack. The people I've referred to were invited to and attended at this ceremony, thereby giving it weight and authority. It took place from the steps of the Courthouse with the square in front surrounded by strong force of armed military and R.I.C. The ten men took up position on the ground flag stones of the '98 monument facing the Courthouse and continuously interrupted the Sheriff by singing patriotic songs and shouting "To hell with the King", etc., etc., and denying the Sheriff's right to proclaim George as our King. They were approached by R.I.C. and military officers to withdraw or be removed by force. Things became so bad that the Sheriff interrupted reading the King's Proclamation to read The Riot Act to legalise the order he had decided to give to remove opposition. Having done so the R.I.C. were ordered to 'fix bayonets' but the charge never took place; the explanation given afterwards being that the men stood on private property and could not be removed, so to the end these men remained and when the Union Jack was run up one of their members put a ladder against the monument, hoisting the only Irish flag they had - green with harp - and proclaiming the Irish Republic.

The Democrat referred in its report to the strange rag hoisted by these men and was ably replied to by Sinn Féin, stating that Ireland had many strange flags in its struggle, including that of a woman's blood-stained petticoat. Thus, so far as Dundalk was concerned, the Irish Republic was proclaimed in 1910. The leader in the Nationalist paper was, "Ten Men Redeem a City". I witnessed this scene and joined Sinn Féin that week. Later Paddy Hughes was dismissed his employment (Poor Rate Collector) by Urban Council because he hauled down the Union Jack on an excursion boat and threw it overboard. These men, John Redmond's supporters, were prepared to take their orders and did so from their oppressors to outlaw and defeat any who dared oppose.

Sinn Féin continued to work and hope, and in 1911 Madame Markievicz delivered a lecture on the Manchester Martyrs at a commemoration concert. Previous to the concert I had the great honour and pleasure of a long chat with her in the hall in Bachelor's Walk, the result being the starting of Fianna Éireann in Dundalk.

I collected a number of boys of my own age, rented a room in the Labourer's Hall and started work there. We circularised business men, etc. outlining aims and objects of organisation and asking for financial help. Amongst those so addressed was the Manager of the school in which I was a monitor and when he saw I was a signatory of circular, he was not long in letting me know what I had done and what its effect on my future would be if I persisted, asking me to decide which I choose. I chose Fianna Éireann and finished as a monitor. At the end of that year, I started as a Fitter apprentice on the Great Northern Railway on the 1st January, 1912. How lucky for me in later life.

The Boy Scouts continued and with information and materials supplied by headquarters we endeavoured to educate ourselves in the works expected of us.

Still a member of Sinn Féin, 1913 came around, the Carson Volunteers and formation of Volunteers in Dublin.

The Manchester Martyrs concert was round again and Major John McBride was the lecturer. The chats with these lecturers before and after these concerts were always very interesting to those concerned and eagerly looked forward to. There were first-hand reports from Dublin and news of all that mattered. On this occasion the topic was, The Irish Volunteers and formation of same.

It was generally agreed that Sinn Féin had little chance of gaining support for this cause in such a politically-minded town. Notwithstanding the fact that the United Irish League was or should have been particularly interested and its cover, Ancient Order of Hibernians, an alleged Catholic defender, no move was made by either to start the Volunteers. Sinn Féin had circulars printed and circulated to all alleged national organisations calling meeting to discuss formation of Irish Volunteers. In this work it had great help of Joe Ward, a good Nationalist, although not connected with Sinn Féin.

The meeting took place and the Volunteers were formed as a result, and the strangest result of all was that Paddy Hughes, Chairman of Sinn Féin, was elected as representative to headquarters, later becoming a member of the Executive. Thus the wheel began to turn: the most vilified man in town became the representative of the vilifiers.

1914 saw the Volunteers grow in strength and early in that year at a review in Grove Field, Castlebellingham,

Dundalk, paraded almost 1,000 strong; infantry, buglers, signallers. The military training was done by ex members of the British Army, Dundalk being able to boast of many who served in the British Army and Militia. Infantry were trained in foot drill, open and closed formation; signallers were trained in Morse Code with flags and buglers for route marching, the Sergeant-Major being John Finnegan, an old militia man who had served in the Boer War, but who was a good nationalist for all that.

July 1914 brought the Great War and the beginning of trouble to the Volunteers. Dundalk, being a British garrison town, contained a force of British military, namely an Artillery Brigade, and these men, afterwards known as "Contemptibles", were the first to be sent to France. The trainer of Irish Volunteer Buglers was also an old British Army man, so when British soldiers were leaving town for the Front he took out the Volunteer Buglers to blow them off. This action led to serious trouble in the Volunteers. The dismissal of the offender being called for but not acceded to, Paddy Hughes and his little Sinn Féin band broke away from the main body and continued drilling under John Finnegan on their own. Some few others joined us, making our total strength around thirty men. Finally the real split came in other parts of the country but Dundalk had already split.

Shortly after the official split a re-organising meeting of Irish Volunteers was called by Paddy Hughes in the Town Hall, Archie Heron, organiser from headquarters, attending. The twenty to thirty men previously mentioned attended. The meeting was just under way when a force of A.O.H. men demanded admission, which was refused them, when they immediately proceeded to break up same with the weapons they were so well trained in using in election work. The Irish Volunteers broke up furniture in rooms, namely tables and chairs, and armed with these, led by Paddy Hughes with a poker, they drove the/

A.O.H. out of the hall on to the street thus clearing the hall of attackers - a couple of hundred against thirty. By this time the R.I.C. had arrived in force and drew a line across the door, barring the entry of the attacking force who always seemed to be cowed by a British uniform.

The Volunteers had to leave the hall in ones or twos, some of them being cowardly attacked and badly beaten by the mob as it scattered around town. For quite a time Irish Volunteers dare not move around singly and were threatened from all sides. Still we continued the good work undaunted and attained the A.O.H.-John Boyle O'Reilly American Alliance hall as a headquarters and drill hall. From here we set out on route marches notwithstanding our small force and continued our parades against all opposition and jeers and gained in numbers while the National Volunteers, as they called themselves, were dwindling and dying.

The 1915 Manchester Martyrs Commemoration held in the Boyle O'Reilly hall, as it was called, was a huge success and brought us many recruits, Sean Milroy being lecturer; thus when it came to March, 1916, for the Robert Emmet Commemoration we could boast to Sean McDermott we were 200 strong while the National Volunteers were all but dead. I fortunately have a copy of the report of that lecture and the lecturer left no doubt in the minds of anyone who cared to think what the Irish Volunteers stood for.

I had the great honour of being Sean's guide on that occasion. The sincerity and simplicity of the man was impressive and captured me in his company in a very short time. No bravado, no heroics - just a duty to be performed and any who could not see their duty were unworthy of notice - there was no appeal to an Irishman to see the light.

The faithful and few were always there to do the right thing; the rest would follow in time.

Seán McDermott's private talk to the Volunteers - he met them - left no doubt as to the ultimate objective. He appealed to them to arm by any and every means, to be disciplined and obey their officers and consider no duty too hard of fulfilment.

A few weeks later there arrived in Dundalk a man named Donald Hannigan. He had a letter of introduction from Pádraig Pearse to Paddy Hughes and a recommendation that Paddy appoint him as his Adjutant. He ranked as Commandant and was described as a training officer. His allocation, I understood from Paddy Hughes, was at Hughes's request to General Headquarters for a man with military knowledge to guide and advise the officers of Dundalk Battalion. This act of G.H.Q. clearly shows that the 1916 Rising was not an impromptu affair, but a planned and organised affair, applying to all Ireland.

These officers I here mention were Paddy Hughes, Seán McEntee, Seumas Toal, Patrick McHugh, Jim Durnin, Frank Neacey, Johnny Finnegan, Drill Instructor. Others who failed in duty I consider unworthy of mention and pass over.

I make no mention of I.R.B. because, so far as Louth was concerned, it could not be said to have been in existence. It was indeed a secret society. With the exception of two men, Tom Hearty and Owen Grant, both old men who were members, I can't recall any other names at that time but in later years I've learned that there were a few young men in it then. However, as an organisation it never showed any interest in the Volunteers, with the exception of the two whom I have mentioned above.

I was never at that time asked to become a member and would not if I was as I had a holy horror of secret

organisations from what I had heard from my father of the Land League days and my uncle who lived with us and was a Clan member in America. For the same reason in 1920 when asked to join I refused and stated I saw no reason for secrecy since all Volunteers had sworn allegiance to the Irish Republic. It is sad to relate that those who had sworn allegiance to the Republic in secret were the first to forswear their allegiance publicly later on. Truly, secret societies only breed traitors and informers.

To continue my story, Commandant O'Hannigan drilled us as we had never been drilled before. He took us into the country on manoeuvres, skirmishing and attacking imaginary foes. From his arrival it was no more playing at soldiers. As far as he could he taught us to aim and fire with miniature rifles, as we had no others. Bayonet practice was done with brush handles, and most of all he taught us discipline and the necessity of waiting for an order and obeying when it came. He made himself known to each and everyone and paid particular attention to officers. His duties brought him into Meath and Monaghan and as far north as Belfast. In his own way he sounded each officer to satisfy himself that he had trustworthy men. One night on manoeuvres he asked me personally how much I was prepared to do for Ireland and if I was prepared to fight if called on. I answered in the affirmative and he then asked me not to mention his query to anyone as we might be in action sooner than I thought. I mentioned we had no arms and he said, "That will be alright; we'll get them".

Assisting Hannigan was another Dublin man named Garry Byrne who was with the Meath men but came to Dundalk on a few occasions and gave us bayonet drill. From Hannigan's arrival in Dundalk Volunteer work was nightly for most of us. Before his arrival we had been engaged in

manufacture of buckshot, emptying shot gun cartridges and re-charging with buckshot cast in moulds I had made in the Railway; the plaster-of-paris moulds supplied by G.H.Q. having proved a failure. This was tedious work and night after night went on into the early hours of the morning and continued up to Holy Thursday. Drill then finished, the munition workers carried on, casting buckshot, reloading cartridges, cleaning off fuses etc. This munition work was carried on each night up to the early morning hours.

I may here mention that our total arms were twelve bore shotguns, a few small arms amongst 200 men. The bayonets adopted for our use consisted of the blades of garden shears or hedge clippers. The handle or tangs of those were straightened and were drilled so that they fitted a shotgun barrel by means of bands and bolts.

Thus equipped the Louth men awaited the call for action.

On Good Friday, I was sent by O'Hannigan to P.J. Burke, Carrickmacross, with a dispatch and a verbal message.

The dispatch contained orders for O/C Monaghan to mobilise his men for manoeuvres for Easter Sunday. The verbal message was that military action would probably be taken on that day and that the Monaghan men should join forces with the Louth men at Ardee at around noon on Easter Sunday.

Burke and I surveyed a map and he plotted his route to Ardee and instructed me to inform O'Hannigan that the orders would be obeyed and the appointment kept.

I returned to Dundalk and arrived at the Boyle's Hall just as the last parade was being dismissed. I reported

to O'Hannigan. He took me aside and told me that he had ordered a general mobilisation for Sunday at 9 a.m. at the Workhouse hill on the Ardee Road. That the armed party would parade at the Boyle's Hall at the same time and march from there to the mobilisation point. For this mobilisation each man was to take three days provisions with him. I was to parade at the Boyle's Hall with the armed party armed with my revolver. O'Hannigan told me "that we might be in action within 24 hours". "This is what we have been waiting for. Our first objective is Tara. I will tell you more later". He also advised all who could do so to get to confession and Communion - just in case.

On Easter Sunday morning the Dundalk Battalion paraded as arranged. All told 74 officers and men answered the call. The absentees caused us a certain amount of suspense.

Seán MacEntee, Mick Donnelly, Vincent Hughes, Paddy Hughes and a few others were ordered to remain in Dundalk in the hope that they might locate the arms of the National Volunteers, capture them and the ammunition and, if successful, take all the stuff on to the main body. Those arms consisted of about 30 Lee Enfield rifles and 3,000 rounds of .303 ammunition.

Unfortunately, the capture of those rifles and ammunition did not materialise. During Easter Week those arms were used by the National Volunteers who constituted themselves into a defence corps or National guard and took their part with the R.I.C. and British military in guarding strategic points around Dundalk, such as - railway stations, road bridges and government offices. Their actions in this respect caused a shocking reversion in using the arms which were originally procured,

to help in effecting our freedom on the side of our oppressors.

At 10 a.m. we marched away from the Workhouse towards Ardee, arriving there around 1 p.m. Accompanying us on the march was a horse and trap belonging to Paddy Hughes and driven by Tom Hearty, the oldest man in the Company, and a horse brake belonging to the McGuill brothers. Those vehicles were used to give periodical rests to the men and so relieve the fatigue of the march. Two R.I.C. men on cycles brought up our rear and, I have no doubt, faithfully reported our progress to their authorities.

Arriving at Ardee, we were met by Phil McMahon, O/C. of the Ardee Volunteers. He was without men. He informed O'Hannigan where the National Volunteer rifles were stored in Ardee. It was not long until a squad was detailed to march to the house in which the arms were stored. 20 Lee Enfield rifles and 2,000 rounds of ammunition were secured. Thus I got my rifle and 30 rounds of ammunition. This, I feel sure, can be recorded as the first successful raid for arms in our time on the enemy. At Ardee, 12 men from Dunleer, joined us, armed in most cases with shotguns.

Leaving Ardee unmolested, we proceeded towards Colton and Slane. The progress now was slowing as our untrained men were tiring. It would be untrue to say that there was no grumbling as the rank and file of the men did not know where our main objective lay. Half way between Ardee and Slane, O'Hannigan called a halt and a fall out for refreshments in the form of attacking our rations. Whilst eating, Seán McEntee joined us from Dundalk with a message that had arrived in Dundalk from our Dublin Headquarters cancelling the manoeuvres. Mick

Donnelly arrived to us some time later with a second copy of the same message. He came by a different route from MacEntee's. O'Hannigan, MacEntee and Paddy Hughes consulted and the march to Slane was continued. Mick Donnelly having been ordered to return to Dundalk and make further efforts to obtain the National Volunteer rifles, Seán MacEntee remained with the Company.

In Slane, O'Hannigan commandeered a bakery premises into which the Company entered and guards were posted to defend the position. Guards were also placed on each road approaching the village. Slane was ours for that night.

The R.I.C. who accompanied us to Slane went to the R.I.C. Barracks there and between the two forces in Slane a condition of peace and order existed.

It was here that the Company got the first real meal since their breakfast in Dundalk that morning. A council of officers was next held. O'Hannigan explained the position with reference to Owen MacNeill's Countermanding Order. He said that on account of all he knew of the Volunteer leaders in Dublin, he was suspicious that the order was bogus and that he wished for confirmation before obeying. He decided first to send a dispatch to Tara where the Meath men should have been and await a reply. He did this but the messenger did not return or report, so when the time due for the messenger's return had elapsed O'Hannigan decided to send another messenger, but this time to Dublin. Seán MacEntee was ordered to undertake this duty and did so taking Tom Hamill with him as a guide. Both set out on their journey on bicycles. They were instructed that when returning from Dublin they should travel the main road towards Dundalk with whatever orders they might receive.

After the two messengers had left, O'Hannigan addressed the men and in a vague way told us the position; that he had got an order that the manoeuvres were off but that he did not believe the authority of his orders and that he had sent to Dublin for confirmation.

A number of men at this time had very sore feet and several men were particularly annoyed at the uncertainty of our position with regards to our orders and could not see reason. O'Hannigan, in view of this situation called for Volunteers - those who were prepared to remain and see the manoeuvre out. Those who were remaining were to go to one side and those who wished to return home were to go to the other side. Close on thirty decided to go home and started for Dundalk in the brake.

There was little sleep for those who remained as we sat around in what appeared to me to be a car shed and cracked jokes and sang until we went to sleep from sheer exhaustion. O'Hannigan seemed never to tire. He was an extremely fit man then, full of confidence in himself, and without a care in the world. At 6 a.m. on Monday morning he shook us up and paraded us on the street and I can assure you it was a stiff awakening indeed. Any person who has any doubts as to what effect walking 20 miles has on an untrained body and then sit up all night on an earthen floor, can take it from me that they will get up from that floor with every bone in their body sore and aching, legs stiff and joints locked. It was with aching joints we paraded on the street and we were just able to carry on until ^{joints/} we were loosened up by marching and our blood flowed freely again.

We marched towards Collon and there we halted outside Dargan's public house. This did not please Paddy Hughes

as he used to say "It was drink that brought us down. Remember Wexford". Few of us were drinking. A bit of breakfast was more in our line and Mrs. Dargan did her best to satisfy our wants. A pint for Donal O'Hannigan meant nothing as he had worked in Guinness's for years. Breakfast being over we were ready to move again. There had been a slight drizzle of rain from the start of our march from Slane. It now commenced to rain in earnest. We remained in shelter for a time but eventually we were called upon to fall in and we then proceeded slowly to Dunleer. There was no marching in military formation - just going slowly at our ease.

Arriving at Dunleer, O'Hannigan dismissed the Dunleer men, telling them that he would contact them if necessary. We Dundalk men proceeded on our journey towards our homes.

Before approaching Lurgan Green, which is about 3 miles from Dundalk, I was resting on the back seat of the only vehicle we had, a back-to-back trap. Our escort, 2 R.I.C. (one Sergeant and one Constable) were cycling behind the trap. I overheard the Sergeant instructing the Constable what to do when we reached Mullaharlin, about a mile closer to Dundalk. The Constable was told to proceed as fast as he could to barracks and inform the Dundalk police of our arrival. I immediately got down off the trap and informed O'Hannigan what I had heard.

O'Hannigan called the Company to halt, formed us up in 2 ranks and addressed us telling that it was possible that an attempt would be made to disarm us entering Dundalk and, if so, that he intended that we should resist and that he expected each man to obey his orders. Any person attempting to break ranks or run away would be shot. He gave me an order to get to the rear of the Company

and any man who broke ranks without his order I was to shoot. At that moment a shot rang out from the rear ranks. One man had his gun loaded and he accidentally discharged it. The bullet grazed Dick Jameson's head but no injury was apparent. Nevertheless, from that moment poor Dick was an insane man and he has served a living death for Ireland as he is in an asylum since. A young man then, he is now an old inmate in Ardee Mental Home.

The parade moved on again and less than half a mile further on we were overtaken by Seán MacEntee and Tom Hamill. Orders at last! The Irish Republic proclaimed in Dublin! Dublin is up. The Volunteers have control of the city!

The Company is halted. O'Hannigan ordered me to take some men down the road in the Dundalk direction to guard the Company's flank. With the men I took charge of I moved to McDowell's farm-yard where I kept 2 men on the road along with myself and I placed 3 men along a ditch on the left hand side of the road facing Dundalk.

At this point the R.I.C. escort were arrested by our men and placed under guard. All cars approaching us from the Dublin or Dundalk directions were halted and examined and a number of motor cars were commandeered for our use.

After some time a whistle was blown and I saw a convoy of cars move off towards Castlebellingham, leaving me and my men behind on the road. I wondered if O'Hannigan had forgotten about me or was there some reason for leaving me there. The 2 R.I.C. prisoners and a number of civilians were about 100 yards on the Dublin side of us. In the distance I thought I could recognise Paddy Hughes moving amongst those people. I could not think of any good reason why I was left on the road so I moved towards

the crowd to speak to, as I thought, Paddy Hughes and to ask him what it was all about. When near enough I discovered I was mistaken; the man I saw was not Paddy Hughes and I realised that all our men were really gone.

I returned to my two men, Arthur Green and Ned Bailey. (The others I had placed along the ditch had disappeared before this unnoticed). I told them that I intended to commandeer the next car that came along and follow the main body, and that if we did not overtake them we would drive to Dublin. At this time I did not know in what direction O'Hannigan intended going.

Just then 3 R.I.C. approached from Dundalk direction on bicycles. I ordered my men to take up a kneeling position on the road to cover the approach of the police. I allowed them to come within 100 yards of us and then called on them to halt. The police ignored my challenge and continued to approach. I repeated the command to halt or I should fire. I told my men to load and as the R.I.C. again ignored the order to halt I gave the order to fire over their heads as a warning that we meant what we threatened. When the shots were fired the police halted very abruptly as they actually fell from their machines and disappeared, whereto I don't know. They made no effort to probe the cause of our shooting and we saw no more of them.

In some time a car arrived and I duly took possession of it, turning the occupants out on the road and promising that car and driver would return to them as soon as I had overtaken those gone before us. I told the driver ~~to start with us and~~ that the harder

he drove the sooner he would be back to his friends. He did not spare the car to get rid of what he must have thought were highwaymen. On our way I told him what had taken place in Dublin - that the Irish Republic had been proclaimed and that we were only carrying out our part in the plans to rid our country of its ancient enemy. I told him he had no reason to fear for his own safety as long as he did what he was told and that I would allow him to return to his friends when I overtook my comrades. That car could travel!

Three miles further on, the main body of our men were halted in the village of Castlebellingham collecting provisions in the form of biscuits, cheese, etc. when I arrived in the village. I ordered our driver to pull in behind the last car in the convoy and getting out of the car, the first man I saw was Seán MacEntee to whom I described what had happened after we were left on the road at Lurgangreen and how I had commandeered the car and my promises to the car owner and its driver.

With MacEntee's approval I released the car and I told the driver to give whatever assistance he could to the civilian people stranded on the road. I told him that the R.I.C. and the military were well able to walk and that civilians only should be assisted by him.

Seán MacEntee was at this time in charge of a guard placed over a number of R.I.C. prisoners. I joined him and just then another R.I.C. man approached us on a bicycle. I ordered this Constable to dismount and I placed him with his comrades who were then standing against an iron railing in the centre of the village. I then searched him and I took some papers he carried in his tunic pocket. These I handed to MacEntee.

Then a motor car arrived which I held up and, to my surprise, it contained a British Army Staff officer. When I saw the resplendent uniform of this officer I expect I was as much amazed as he was to see a youth like me with a gun ordering him about. I told him to get out of the car. I explained who we were and why we were acting as we were, also telling him he was our prisoner and I placed him at the head of a line of prisoners he being on the end of line nearest the Dublin side of the village and the R.I.C. men were on the other end of the line nearest the Dundalk side of the village. A number of civilian prisoners separated the military officer from the R.I.C. Thus the whole police garrison of Castlebellingham were standing in line as our prisoners along with a British Army Staff Officer. I accepted officer's word that he was not armed and did not search him.

We then commandeered the Military Staff Officer's car and I ordered the driver to take a place in the centre of the column of cars which we had commandeered. This proved to be a serious mistake but it was only one of many. Another mistake we made was our failure to take over the arms and ammunition of the police garrison of the barracks whom we held as prisoners.

There was a blast of a whistle which was the signal to prepare to move off. MacEntee withdrew the guard on the prisoners but ordered me to cover the prisoners from the last car.

I took up position on the running board of the car and I covered the prisoners with the rifle I carried. As the guard was being withdrawn, and MacEntee's back being turned, the staff officer whom I had covered made a move that appeared to me as if he was attempting to draw a gun. I immediately called on him to put up

his hands. He did not obey. I called again and he again ignored my call. I called no more but fired, and, to my amazement, the R.I.C. man at the other end of the line of prisoners fell. Another shot then rang out and I called out to cease fire. What happened has never been fully explained. The R.I.C. man who fell on the road was killed by a charge of buckshot fired from a shotgun and the staff officer who fell to the ground as we were leaving the village was shot through the lung by .303 bullet. He survived his wounding.

The man who fired the shot from the shotgun has never admitted the mistake or the accident or whatever his motive was and so it will now probably remain forever his secret. I feel convinced that the R.I.C. man was killed accidentally. His death as it happened was regretted sincerely by all in charge of the Volunteers. It was not our policy to shoot defenceless prisoners without good or sufficient reasons. Every night from this on, whilst we were together, that man was prayed for by the whole Company and I hope continues to be prayed for by all of us who still survive. May the Lord have mercy on his soul.

At the inquest held on the shot policeman, a Sergeant Kiernan, R.I.C., who knew me personally, swore that I was the man who fired the fatal shot. The Sergeant's evidence was corroborated by a civilian witness named Byrne, a local publican, who also knew me. The usual verdict in such cases and with such evidence was given - a charge of murder against me. My name and a very good description of my appearance was inserted in the Hue & Cry, an official police publication. My name and description appeared regularly in all issues of the Hue and Cry with other wanted persons in order

to keep fresh in the minds of the police force descriptions etc. of wanted persons. The police had been reading my description from time to time for a period of practically five years and at no time were they able to contact the person wanted although I was moving freely under their noses in Dublin city for most of the time my description was appearing in the Hue and Cry. It must be admitted that the relations between the Dublin Metropolitan Police and the R.I.C. could not be described as cordial, and this fact may have had something to do with my evading capture throughout those years.

Our column of cars, 8 in all, moved off, whereto I knew not. O'Hannigan and a guide were in the first car followed by the other cars and the rear taken up by the faithful horse and the back-to-back trap. As I have already stated, I placed the driver and the car of the British officer in the centre of the column of cars in Castlebellingham, and when we were travelling slowly on a narrow road this military driver ditched his car in such a manner as to completely block the road thus cutting our convoy in two. All efforts to pull the car out of the ditch proved fruitless whilst the front portion of the convoy forged ahead unaware of the position in the rear.

Seán MacEntee and I were in the cut off portion which consisted of three motor cars and the horse and trap. Maps were of no use to us as we had no idea as to where we were. No habitation was visible where we might enquire directions. We had previously left a main road and taken to a bye-road, so after some consultation we decided to return to the main road and proceed in the opposite direction to that in which the car had come and we hoped for the best.

We had to take the driver of the ditched car with us as a prisoner, and taking him was not a pleasant decision. We proceeded on the main road and when daylight came we found that we were entering the village of Dunshaughlin. One of our cars had run out of petrol and as a result I think we made another great mistake. One car and the horse and trap would ^{not/} carry all of us and we decided to abandon the cars but to retain the horse and trap and proceed as best we could on foot. Why we did not attempt to procure petrol for the cars I cannot even to this ^{day/} explain. It may have been that in those days petrol dealers were few and far between, and perhaps our force being now so small we did not wish to contact any enemy forces which we might do at that early hour if we attempted to arouse people to commandeer our requirements.

Here some of our ~~men~~ ~~refused~~ refused to go any further and left our Company and returned in the direction of their homes. Those remaining commenced to plod their weary way hungry, ^{wet/} sleepy and cold. Outside the meagre rations we carried, the only food we had from Sunday morning was a meal on Sunday night in Slane and a small tea breakfast on Monday morning in Collon. It was now Tuesday morning. It is not surprising, therefore, that there should be a few who were not prepared to make such sacrifices at that hour with a 20 mile walk still facing us.

Having gone some distance from Dunshaughlin, I suggested to Seán MacEntee that the men should be relieved of their arms and ammunition, and that with 2 others I should proceed with the arms and ammunition by horse and trap to Dublin, the remainder to follow at

their ease. On my arrival in Dublin I hoped to arrange for transport to be sent for those following. This proposition of mine was agreed to. The arms and ammunition were transferred to the trap and, accompanied by J. Hughes and P. Quinn, I set out for the city.

We proceeded without incident until we reached Beggstown on the main road outside Dunboyne. There a man stepped out on the road and called on us to halt. This man proved to be a guard for the first half of our Company who had left us when the car was ditched. Our men were camped in a barn off the road.

Naturally, we were delighted to make contact again with O'Hannigan, Hughes and the rest of them. I at once reported to O'Hannigan, telling him of the position and of the men following on behind us. He told my companions and I to go and get some rest and that he would look after the men coming after us. This he did and a number of those we had left outside Dunshaughlin that morning again joined up with us at Beggstown. How Seán MacEntee became detached is of interest and can best be told by himself.

I was awakened by O'Hannigan that evening and told that he had made contact with the Meath men and that they would join us that night. We were then to proceed to Mulhuddart as Blanchardstown was already occupied.

He sent a guide with me to a house nearby where I was well received and had a good meal, the first/^{genuine one} since Monday morning. My clothes were partly dried and I was reasonably comfortable when I had finished my meal before a good fire and I must say that I was sorry to leave it. Mr. Mullally, the owner of the house and a

forge nearby, had 2 sons in the Volunteers, and with his 2 daughters and wife they were our best friends and helpers for the remainder of the week. Along with some other girls from Dunboyne, they cooked for us and fed us.

That night, 12 armed men from Dunboyne under Seán Boylan joined us. Under their guidance we proceeded across country towards Tyrellstown and on Wednesday morning we took possession of Tyrellstown House, Mulhuddart. Our total strength was now 42 men all told fully armed. One serious defect in our armament was the shotguns which had become useless as the cartridges had swollen with the severe wettings and would not fit into the breaches of the shotguns even when we had laid them out to dry.

All the time O'Hannigan had maintained contact with headquarters and reported progress. The last dispatch we received from Headquarters was on Wednesday evening, ordering us under ~~the~~ circumstances to come into Dublin City. O'Hannigan had, meantime, been endeavouring to contact the Co. Dublin men and he increased his efforts on the receipt of the dispatch mentioned above as he hoped with their guidance our combined forces could enter the city.

O'Hannigan succeeded in making contact with Thomas Ashe and he went to meet Ashe on Friday to arrange a merger of forces. Unfortunately, he had to return without meeting his man who had made a further appointment to meet O'Hannigan on Sunday morning.

O'Hannigan called to McAllister's of Swords on Sunday morning and was informed that Dublin had surrendered and that the military were ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~area~~ ~~of~~ ~~Swords~~.
/McAllister's being about a mile north of Swords.
Swords, He returned to Tyrellstown House which we

evacuated that night, the Dunboyne men going to their homes and the Dundalk men to a vacant house belonging to a Mr. Keating - one of the Dunboyne men. This house was about a mile on the Dunboyne side of Beggstown. We remained there until the following Tuesday evening. At one time on Tuesday we were surrounded by military. I noticed O'Hannigan leaving the house with his rifle and I asked him where he was going. He told me we were surrounded and that he was not going to surrender. I told him that his attitude was unfair as the men should be told the position and allowed to decide. He then agreed to put the position before the men, which he did, telling them that he personally had no intention of surrendering to the British. The men then, one and all, said that they would stand by O'Hannigan and obey all his orders. O'Hannigan then told us that he would take no action unless we were attacked.

The military did not locate us so we dumped our arms and disbanded that night. All our men returned to their homes as best they could. The last to leave were O'Hannigan, Paddy Hughes and myself.

Each of us was aware at this time that we had been charged with the shooting at Castlebellingham and that there was a charge of murder which we must face should we be arrested. As we had no intention to give ourselves up it was decided that we should evade arrest.

Paddy Hughes went to Keating's home. Hannigan procured a bicycle and said he was going to Limerick, while I went to Mullaly's house. The following Sunday I went to Mass in Dunboyne and on the Tuesday following the R.I.C. raided Mullaly's and interrogated me. They were very suspicious and mentioned that I answered to the descriptions of a

fellow wanted for shooting police. I was posing as a tramp fiddler at this time. The police told me I was in bad company whilst with the Mullaly's, hence their suspicions of me. It must have been my retorts on Mullaly's behalf that allayed their suspicions of me. I remained there that night and the next morning I set out for Dublin. The R.I.C. arrived at Mullaly's shortly after my departure to arrest me. On my arrival in Dublin I contacted my sister who was in business in George's Street. My appearance to my sister was the first news that any member of my family had of me from Easter Sunday, over a fortnight previous. I remained at my sister's lodgings on Iona Road until I got in touch with friends - Tom Kieran and his wife, who had a room in Mountjoy Street.

Signed:

Patrick McHugh
(Patrick McHugh)

Date:

15th May 52
15th May 1952.

Witness:

John McCoy
(John McCoy)
15th May 1952
15th May 1952.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21
No. W.S. <i>677</i>

ADDENDUM.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 677

Detailed list of men who took part in the 1916 Rising,

Dundalk Area.

1.

Those who served 23rd April 1916 to 2nd May 1916 and occupied Tyrrellstown House.

James Dunne	Castletown Road	Dundalk
John Kieran	Park Street	-do-
Ed. Bailey	Park Street	-do-
Fras. Martin	Dublin Street	-do- (dead)
James Kelly	North Marsh	-do-
Owen O'Dowd	Castletown Road	-do-
Ed. Kieran	Market Street	-do- (dead)
Jas. Durnin	Carrick Street	-do-
Arthur Green	Mary Street North	-do-
Thos. McCrave	Seatown	-do-
Patrick Hughes	Park Street	-do- (dead)
Harry Litchfield	Kilkerly	-do-
Patrick Mulholland	Kilkerly	-do-
Richard Jameson	Ardee Mental Home	Ardee
James Hughes	U.S.A.	
Hugh Kearney	Dublin Street	Dundalk
Richard O'Dowd	Castletown Road	-do-
Daniel Tuite	Castletown Road	-do-
Francis Coburn	Castletown Road	-do-
Patrick McHugh	33, Barrow Street	Dublin.
Felix O'Neill	U.S.A.	
Patrick Finn	U.S.A.	
Samuel Hall	Jocelyn Street	Dundalk
Owen Clifford	U.S.A.	
Hugh Quinn		Dublin

P. M. H.

Thos. McEntiggart		
Thos. Mulholland	Bridge Street	Dundalk (dead)
Patrick Garvey	Hill Street	do (dead)
Donald O'Hannigan	95, St. Jarlath Road	Cabra
James Reilly	Rathmore, Philipstown, Kilkerly	Dundalk

2.

Those who served 23rd, 24th and 25th April 1916 and became disconnected, were ordered home on account of age, infirmity or as stated.

Peter Halpenny or Halpin	Byrnes Row	Dundalk	Disconnected
John Barrett	Dublin Street (dead)	-do-	-do-
James Agnew	Anne Street	-do-	-do-
James Hanratty	Mill Street	-do-	-do-
Joseph Waller	Dowdalshill	-do-	-do-
Michael Ferguson	Castletown- cooley	Cooley	-do-
James Sally	U.S.A.		-do-
Denis Leahy	Hill Street (dead)	Dundalk	-do-
James O'Hanlon	Castletown	Cooley	Ordered away on account of difference with G.H.Q. officer.
John Quinn	Armagh		Ordered to return to Dundalk on account of failing feet
Thomas Hearty	Bridge Street (dead)	Dundalk	Ordered to return on account of age.
Patrick Casey	London.		Ordered to dump motor car. Did not return.
Seán McEntee	Dublin.		Disconnected but continued on to Dublin and joined Dublin Garr.

G. M. H.

Peter Clifford	Castletown Road	Dundalk	Sent with dispatch to Dublin. Did not return.
Thos. Sharkey	Dublin Street	Dundalk	Claims such service. Cannot recall

3.

Those ordered to remain in Dundalk on Special Duty, or ordered on other duty.

Vincent Hughes	Liverpool)	Ordered to remain in Dundalk to locate and capture National Volunteer rifles.
Patrick Hughes	America)	
Michael Hand	-----)	
Patrick Farrelly	Market Sq., Dundalk.)	
Michael Donnelly	Boosterstown Ave., Dublin.)	
Joseph Berrill	Williamson's Place, Dundalk.)	Ordered as above. Joined main body Sunday with countermanding order. Sent to Dublin. Did not return.
Phil McMahon	Dublin)	Ordered on Special Duty. Refer to Donal O'Hannigan.
Henry Deary	Church St. Dundalk.)	Reported Sunday as above. Left same evening. Did not return. As informed.

4.

Those who served 23rd - 24th April 1916 but were ordered home to await further orders.

Thos. Hamill	Broughton Street	Dundalk	Fatigue
Michael Reynolds	Dunleer		
James Layng	Galway		
Wls. Butterly	Grangebellew	Dunleer	
Seán Butterly	-do-	-do-	
Joseph Kelly	-do-	-do-	
Thomas Kelly	-do-	-do-	

P. M. H.

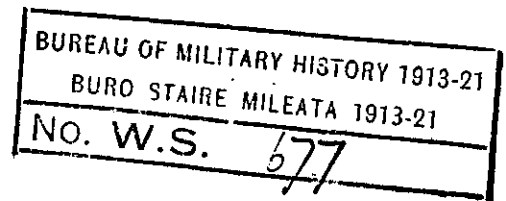
Those who served Easter Sunday 23rd April 1916, remained with company that day and volunteered to return home when uncertainty of position was explained to them. Some returning Sunday night, others Monday morning or as stated.

Patrick Quigly	Hill Street.	Dundalk.	(dead)
Wm. Atkinson	Mulholland Ave.	-do-	(dead)
Patrick Bishop	Dublin Street	-do-	
Arthur O'Neill	Hill Street	-do-	
Patrick Kerr	Linenhall Street	-do-	
Francis Neacy	Earl Street	-do-	
Thos. Kieran	Dublin		
Ed. Clifford	Market Street	Dundalk	
John Flynn	Parnell Park	-do-	
Owen Dullaghan	Barrack Street	-do-	
Owen McGeough	Broomfield	Castleblayney	(dead)
John McEntiggart	Kilkerly	Dundalk	
Patrick McArdle	Knockbridge	-do-	
Joseph Duffy	Castletown Road	-do-	
James Conlon	Seatown	-do-	
Thos. Byrne	c/o F. Shorts	-do-	
Patrick McKenna	Parnell Park	-do-	
James Gennings	Batchelors Walk	-do-	
Peter Kieran	Brook Street	-do-	
Patrick Boyd	Defenders Row	-do-	(dead)
John Hearty	Castletown Road	Dundalk	Cannot recall
Frank McQuillan	-do-	-do-	
Patrick Garvey	c/o O'Connells	Earl St. Dundalk	
P. Hoey		Dundalk	(dead) Cannot recall
Matthew Lynch	Kilkerly	-do-	
Jas. Toal	Batchelors Walk	-do-	
Joseph Larrissey	Dowdalshill	-do-	Ordered home. Too young.

P. McA

Those who did not mobilise on 23rd April 1916 or were not allowed to participate.

Philip McQuillan	Castletown Road	Dundalk	
John Finnegan	St. Patricks Tee.	-do-	
Joseph McGuill	Bridge Street	-do-	(dead)
Peadar Donnelly	Church Street	-do-	(dead)
Owen Grant	Bridge-a-chrin	-do-	(dead)



P. McE