

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
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NO. W.S. 1/140

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

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**Witness**

Patrick Ward,  
41 Stella Gardens,  
Irishtown,  
Dublin.

**Identity.**

Member of 'B' Company, 3rd Battalion,  
Dublin Brigade, 1914 - .

**Subject.**

Formation of Fianna Eireann, Dublin, 1909,  
and national activities up to 1916.

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

Nil

File No. S-115.

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STATEMENT BY MR. PATRICK WARD

41 Stella Gardens, Irishtown, Dublin.

Eamon Martin and I belonged to Father Anderson Branch of the Gaelic League, 44 Sandwith St. I was secretary of that Branch at the time. That would be 1909. Eamon Martin came to a class meeting in the usual way early in 1909, certainly before April, and he told me on our way home that he had been talking to his old headmaster, Mr. William O'Neill who, at that time, lived on Lower Kimmage Road. In fact, his old head schoolmaster sent for him.

Mr. O'Neill told Eamon that Countess Markievicz had called into the school during the week and told him that she was engaged with others in starting a Boy Scout Movement which would be run on national, patriotic lines, and would he use his influence to have the boys join the scout movement. Mr. O'Neill told Eamon that he put some questions to Madame Markievicz because he thought that he ought to know what kind of Movement it was likely to be; and from what she said he thought that the Movement would be good. But, at all events, he had promised to mention it to a couple of older pupils and that was the reason he was giving Eamon the information. Well, we had a chat about this (Eamon and I) and we decided to go along. The schoolmaster had the address of Madame Markievicz - 34 Lower Camden St. - and we decided we would go along and see for ourselves. Although Madame Markievicz probably was very wellknown in Dublin at the time we had never heard of her before.

A day or two after this conversation, having decided on the day we'd go, we did go to Camden St. and found a small number of people in the hall. Acting as a sort of committee was Madame herself, Bulmer Hobson, who was always at her right hand, and Pdraig Ó Ríain. I think at that particular

time that already some of the Fitzgeralds of Great Brunswick St. - now Pearse St. - who were younger than we were, were there. Actually, I forget who were in the hall, but there were not many.

We had a conversation with these people and we thought that the programme was the very thing we had hoped might be started sometime or another, and we joined.

Madame Markievicz was very intense. She was the first person who captured your notice; then Bulmer Hobson, very quiet and affable and very competent to deal with any question you would like to put, was next, apparently, in our mind in importance, and for a good while after these were our impressions. There was also Pádraig Ó Riain, a good, efficient secretary.

Afterwards I never discussed this aspect with Eamon Martin because we got very busy with different channels of the Movement and had little time to talk. But for myself, I came to reverse the assessment of importance of these three people. It did not take me very long to reach this stage of mind and I came to consider Pádraig Ó Riain as by far the most significant member of that small committee at the time. He, I think, would have been a year, perhaps two, older than Martin and myself. We were of equal age. But for his age, his intellectual and studious development was perhaps ten years in advance of us. He was utterly quiet with a quiet sense of humour and a perfect sense of justice. I think that I have said enough about Pádraig Ó Riain because I find that in these things everybody, apparently, singled out somebody or other and they became prejudiced in their favour or otherwise. However, there was not much done at this period in the hall; it was in the beginning stage and everybody was waiting for some organisation of the boys into companies or squads for military training which was to be the essential purpose of the

organisation. But very shortly after this, training began - ordinary squad drill in the hall, very elementary military training; and, about the same time also, it was decided to have a general convention and to try and get the Mansion House for that purpose. The Mansion House was secured and we had the first Árd Fheis in about April 1909, I think.

We used to come out at Easter and Whit and, in the summer holidays, to a large field at the back of Scoil Éanna, where we became familiar with Padraig and Liam Pearse. Thomas McDonagh, who was a young schoolmaster, older than we were, Desmond Ryan, Eamon Bulfin and, I think, P.J. Delaney, who was younger than I. With the exception of McDonagh, the others were comparatively younger than we were.

Shortly after the Convention of 1911, Con Colbert asked me to join a Secret Society, actually the Fenian Brotherhood, officially the I.R.B. I said yes, and we made an appointment to meet at 41 Parnell Square on a certain night where I was sworn in by Colbert, I think, and then brought into another room where I was surprised to find Eamon Martin, Liam Mallows, Pádraig Ó Riain and a few other members of the Fianna. All the members of this particular circle, which afterwards numbered about 20, were members of the Fianna. It was a Fianna unit circle of the I.R.B. which had as a name, for camouflage purposes, "The John Mitchel Literary and Debating Society".

Through Hobson, Pádraig Ó Riain and Colbert, it seems to me that the Fianna had originally been started with the definite purpose of recruiting young blood for the I.R.B. It is certain that Madame Markievicz knew nothing at all about this I.R.B. background and would have been violently opposed to any such connection.

One of our normal outings, which was in the nature of a general mobilisation each year, was to Bodenstown. I remember on one occasion, I think the year might be about 1913, Major

McBride was invited to give a lecture in the hall, 34 Camden St. He agreed, and gave a lecture dealing with the warfare of small nations against their oppressors with, of course, the background of the Boer War as material. Con Colbert, replying to the lecturer afterwards, disagreed strenuously with the Major's assertion that the Insurrection of '98 was mainly lost through drunkenness on the part of the insurgents who, having won a battle, dispersed and celebrated the victory in an orgy of drink, and were out of touch until the next battle would be imminent, when they would all round up as best they could. Colbert's point was that the indiscipline was not due to drink but that the drink was due to indiscipline. Had the United Irishmen been organised in well-disciplined formations they could have been easily controlled.

The names that remain in my memory as continually active members attending every parade and filling some official function, either as squad leaders or committee members etc., were Liam Mellows; Michael Lonergan; Con Colbert; Frank, Percy and Jack Reynolds; Jimmy, Leo, Theo, Tom and Willie Fitzgerald; Tom Donoghue; Frank O'Brien; Willie O'Brien; Sean Kavanagh; Leo and Henry Walpole, Seamus Kavanagh; a chap named Homan; Seamus Pouch; Sean Heuston; ;.... McGowan and Seumas Finlay.

Another camping place was at the foot of the Three Rock Mountain, where Madame Markievicz had rented a little cottage near the Lamb Doyle's.

A frequent visitor to Dublin was Joe Robinson from Glasgow. He also attended the Árd Fheis. I don't remember if they actually organised a slugh in Glasgow, but it was intended to do so, and Joe Robinson was to take on that work with another man whose name, if I am not mistaken, is Dan McCarrigan. But at all events, Joe Robinson attended all our annual meetings at various times during the year when he could do so.

In 1913, or early in 1914, I was detached from the Fianna

and instructed to join the Volunteers whole time when I joined B/Company, 3rd Battalion, and from that time onwards most of my activity was concerned with the Volunteers. But I, along with many others who had been so detached, kept in close touch with the Fianna and visited the hall at frequent intervals.

I had the usual drill and training up to July 1914. Then the Howth gun-running episode occurred. The whole Dublin Brigade was mobilised on Sunday, 26th July, and proceeded in route march order to Howth. I was with B/Company of the 3rd Battalion of which Sean McMahon was company officer. I had been the first company captain of B/Company on its formation and for a short time afterwards, but Sean McMahon took over from me then, being more efficient in military training.

On the march to Howth we passed one of the Fianna who was standing on top of the sea wall at Sutton Strand. He was signalling to Childers' yacht "The Asgard". We passed other signallers at intervals. On reaching Howth we were paraded at the end of the East Pier and 'stood at ease', nobody breaking ranks. The cargo of the yacht was handed up and the Howth Mauser rifles passed along, each man receiving a rifle. Immediately the business of receiving the arms was complete the brigade was 'brought to attention' and marched off again in route march order to Dublin. No incident occurred until the head of the column, near which we of the 3rd Battalion were were intercepted by a cordon of Scottish Borderers. They were standing with fixed bayonets presented. We were marched right up to the points of the bayonets and halted there. There was no confusion, just a deadlock. I was very close to the front rank and saw practically anything that could be seen at that point. Bulmer Hobson and Michael J. Judge went forward to meet Harrel from Dublin Castle who was, apparently, in charge of operations on the British side. I understood afterwards that this conference with Harrel was a manoeuvre on the part of Hobson and Judge to keep the English forces inactive whilst

the main body of our men were ordered to slip home quietly by side roads anyway they possibly could, taking the arms with them. This was, apparently, very successful, because Harrel was very angry on discovering that there was no more for him to do there.

After the Howth gunrunning, training went on as usual and the next sensational event was the Kilcoole affair on Sunday, 1st August 1914. I forget actually how the forces for this operation were disposed. Unlike the Howth gunrunning, which took place quite openly, the force for the Kilcoole gunrunning were notified secretly and the men proceeded in larger or smaller groups of cyclists by different roads. Andy Fitzpatrick of the National Telephone Company was in charge of a party who went in advance and cut all telephone and telegraph wires surrounding Delgany. The party I was with included Martin Ryan, Charlie Murphy, Garry Holohan, and I forget who else. We went on bicycles by Dundrum and Sandyford, the Scalp, Enniskerry, Glen-of-the-Downs, and turned left down to the coast near Delgany. I was stationed along with Garry Holohan on a stretch of road outside of Delgany on the Bray side. As far as I remember, our instructions were to allow anyone to proceed towards Delgany, with special reference to the R.I.C., but not to allow anybody to pass from Delgany. We were armed with automatic pistols. About 2 o'clock in the morning, the night being very dark, two R.I.C. men showed up. We could hardly see them in the dark. When they accosted us to know where we were going so late, we told them a story of a breakdown on the bicycle. They chatted for a while and proceeded on towards Delgany. There were other outposts between us and Delgany to keep track of their movements. I understood they were taken charge of in Delgany and held prisoner until the operation was completed and the parties safely dispersed. Garry Holohan and I were relieved some time about 5 o'clock in the morning and

told to go home. Garry and I went home by ourselves through the Glen-of-the-Downs.

On the following Monday, which was August Bank Holiday, I was to meet Pádraig Ó Riain, Mellows and Colbert in town. I met them in town and Bulmer Hobson happened to be with them, also Darrell Figgis. We all went up to the D.B.C. tea rooms in College St. and had coffee. There was a good deal of discussion about incidents of the Kilcoole gunrunning. I don't remember anything very sensational occurring from that period onwards.

The usual training in the hall at 41 Parnell Square and in Camden Row was carried on. Except for the split, which occurred when John Redmond's volunteers decided that they would no longer work along with the original body and broke away to form a separate body which they called "The National Volunteers", there was nothing unusual. This did not affect our Company very much because we had not recruited many of the adherents of the Irish Parliamentary Party, and the Company remained, as far as I remember, intact.

Early in 1916, it was clear to a good many of the leading people in the Volunteers that there would soon be open military action against the British forces in Ireland. I was not familiar with all the various phases, doubts and uncertainties which, I learned afterwards, existed, so I cannot give any evidence.

In February of that year I was married and left home to take a place of our own in Sandymount. This occurrence, coupled with the fact that shortly after my marriage I was down with pneumonia, was the reason why I had been out of touch with my Company from the time of my marriage up to Easter of 1916. I got no mobilisation call either on the Sunday or Monday and, at that time, was so much out of touch that I did not know that the Rising was so imminent. Eamon Martin had told me



shortly before my marriage that there probably would be a rising early in this year of 1916. The first intimation of I had that something unusual was happening was the general rumour which I heard on my way to lunch on Easter Monday. That evening my wife and I decided that we should get back if possible to my wife's home in Sandwith St. and that she should stay there until further notice.

We reached Sandwith St. on Monday night and I went up to Alderman Paddy Power's house, 62 Brunswick Street. It faced Burke's Distillery which backed on to the railway. Alderman Paddy Power, whose son - also Paddy - was on the railway, was in close touch with the Volunteers who had occupied the railway and other positions in the area. He suggested that it would be better to wait until morning to go across and slip in through the Distillery. I went in that Tuesday morning and met one of the Fitzgeralds who was apparently on duty inside. He brought me through the Distillery, up a ladderway from the top of the Distillery building on to the platform of Westland Row Station, where I proceeded along with Fitzgerald to report to Sean McMahon in Boland's Bakery. From there I was detailed for duty on Clarence St. railway bridge. I was on duty there with, at various times, Dick Pearl, Billy McCabe, Fred Burchell, and others whom I forget. I spent the remainder of the week on duty at this post and at Westland Row Station and a small cottage in Eblana Villas which faced up towards the Elpis Hotel in Mount St.

The last day and night - that was Saturday and Sunday morning - I spent on sentry duty with Joe McDermott in a room over Commandant de Valera's headquarters at the back gate of Boland's Bakery facing out to the top of Clarence Street. During that week we had, as far as I remember, - apart from Clanwilliam Place and Lieutenant Malone's post at the corner of Haddington Road - two casualties on the railway. One was

Peadar Macken, and the other a man named Ennis from Sandymount. I was not present at either of these deaths. We heard of them at our posts in the usual way that word was carried. Similarly in the battles of Clanwilliam House and Lieutenant Malone's post, we were being informed of progress there but were not near enough to witness anything of the battle of Mount St. Bridge except to see the flame of the burning and to hear the noise of rapid fire.

Firing had died down except for sniping on both sides. Our positions on Clarence St. Bridge and the house in Eblana Villas were constantly under fire from snipers who were in a top room in the Elpis Hotel. Firing never ceased up to the end.

On Sunday morning, although we now know that the surrender had actually taken place, we were totally unaware of this development. Sunday morning was exceptionally quiet. The weather was sunny and fine and there were all sorts of rumours of forces marching to relieve the city and even that there was a possibility of a German landing. This made the announcement around 12 o'clock all the more staggering. All the outposts were called in to parade in the flour stores of the Bakery. We were paraded, brought 'to attention' and Commandant de Valera, Charlie Murphy, who had been with him in close attendance all the week, and the remainder of the staff officers were assembled when Commandant de Valera announced that we were to surrender. He made it plain that this was an order he had relieved himself and which he was passing on as an order. It was possible in the position we had held, not being by any means surrounded on all sides, for the whole garrison to leave by the railway and proceed home quietly, but this would not fulfil the terms of the surrender, and Commandant de Valera stated, as we had gone into battle on an order, the order to surrender was equally binding.

We were formed into fours and marched out the front gate along Grand Canal St., up Grattan St. at the top of which there was a barricade manned by troops of the Sherwood Foresters, and the Notts and Derbys. We piled our arms at the barricade; we were searched and marched up to the Royal Dublin Society Show Grounds where the British at the time had a Remount Depot. We were held in the Show Grounds until the following day.

On the Monday we were paraded and marched under heavy escort up to Richmond Barracks in Inchicore. We were held prisoner in overcrowded military billets until the 5th May, when we were again paraded and marched down to the North Wall. The immediate party with me, mostly 3rd Battalion, 1st Battalion and some 4th Battalion men, were brought to Wakefield Prison in Yorkshire and, after a month, were transferred from Wakefield to Frongoch. I was amongst the last of the earlier batch of releases some time in August 1916.

Signed: Patrick Ward.

(Patrick Ward)  
Date: 30 March 1955  
30 March 1955.

Witness: Sean Brennan Lieut.-Col.  
(Sean Brennan) Lieut.-Col.

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