

W.S. 1301  
**DUPLICATE**

**BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21**  
**BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21**  
**No. W.S. 1301**

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1.301

Witness

Michael Collins,  
Maiden Street,  
Newcastlewest,  
Co. Limerick.

Identity.

Member of Irish Volunteers,  
Monegay, Co. Limerick, 1913-1921.

Subject.

Monegay Company Irish Volunteers  
Co. Limerick, 1913-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. 8.2601

Form B.S.M. 2

DUPLICATE

STATEMENT OF MICHAEL COLLINS

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21  
NO. W.S. 1301

Walden St., Newcastlewest, Co. Limerick

I was born in the parish of Templeglantine on 10th October 1888, and attended the local national school until I was ten years of age. At the age of 12 years I went to work for a local farmer.

I was working in the parish of Moneygay in the year 1913 when a company of Volunteers was formed there. I joined the company then. The strength was 60 men. Dan Collins, brother of Con Collins (later a T.D.) was the chief organiser. A man named James Kelly, an ex-British soldier, was our drill instructor. We were drilling every night of the week.

After John Redmond's famous speech advising the young men of Ireland to join the British army, there was a split in the company. One half were all in favour of Redmond's proposal but few of them took his advice and joined the army. After a time this section ceased to function. The other half were totally opposed to Redmond's proposal and continued to meet and drill as usual. I belonged to this group. Around this time we elected officers for our group. Our first officers were:- Ger Kiely, Dan Conway and Tadhg Collins. Dan Collins became organiser for the area adjacent to Moneygay and assisted Ernest Blythe in reorganising companies in Tournafulla, Templeglantine and other places.

Routine drilling continued up to Easter 1916. On Easter Sunday we marched to Glenquin Castle where we met companies from Drumeollogher, Tournafulla, Abbeyfeale, Newcastlewest, Ardagh and Raheena. Volunteers present numbered about 400 and some of these had shotguns. I had a '98 type pike.

Several men of our company had similar pikes. They had been made in the village by a blacksmith named Paddy McCarthy. Ger Kiely was in charge of our company. Fr. Hayes and Fr. Wall were present. We waited all day for instructions, but nothing happened. At about 8 p.m. we were dismissed and we returned to our homes. After the surrender in Dublin, some of the Volunteers handed in their guns to the R.I.C. barracks at Strand in the parish of Moneygay.

From then to the spring of 1917 there was very little activity until a Feis was held at Strand which was attended by all Volunteers in the area. That night we were mobilised by Ger Kiely and met at Ballykenny Cross. 20 Volunteers turned up. Tadhg Collins as well as Ger Kiely was present. After the meeting we raided the house of a farmer named Mulcahy for two rifles belonging to the company which it was thought Mulcahy had retained after the split. He was in favour of Redmond and had ceased to take an active part in the company. We did not get the rifles, but got a banner, the property of the company, instead. The banner was a huge one carried on two poles depicting a priest saying Mass on a Mass rock in a glen. Having failed to get the rifles at Mulcahy's, we then raided the house of John Riordan, the parish clerk of Moneygay, for them. We failed to find them there either. We had just left his house when he seized a shotgun and fired two shots after us. Nobody was hit. On his way into Newcastlewest next morning to report the matter to the R.I.C., Riordan was met by two Volunteers named Jack and Tadhg Collins who, having ascertained his intentions, gave him a severe beating and threatened to shoot him if he informed the police. Needless to say, he did not report to the R.I.C.

Routine drilling continued throughout 1917 and 1918.

National Archives Act, 1986, Regulations, 1988

**ABSTRACTION OF PART(S) PURSUANT TO REGULATION 8**

**Form to be completed and inserted in the original record  
in place of each part abstracted**

- (i) Reference number of the separate cover under which the abstracted part has been filed: WS 1301/A
- (ii) How many documents have been abstracted: 3ff
- (iii) The date of each such document: 6 December 1955

(iv) The description of each document:  
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names of individuals

(Where appropriate, a composite description may be entered in respect of two or more related documents).

- (v) Reason(s) why the part has been abstracted for retention:  
(c) Would or might cause distress or danger to living persons on the ground that they contain information about individuals, or would or might be likely to lead to an action for damages for defamation.

( These will be the reasons given on the certificate under Section 8(4).)



Name: (J. Moloney.)

Grade: Col.

Department/Office/Court:

Date: 7 March 2003.

During the conscription scare in 1918 we received an extra ten men into the company. These left when the scare was over.

Early in the year 1919, Dan Collins was arrested and sentenced to three months for drilling and organising the Volunteers. We, however, continued to meet and drill, but not so openly as before. Later in the year, the R.I.C. became more active and were constantly raiding and searching the homes of Volunteers including the home of my employer. I managed to elude them for a time. Eventually, in early 1920, I left Moneygay Company area and went to Bruff area in East Limerick where Martin Conway was Company Captain. After some inquiries I was officially transferred to Bruff Company and was given a Lee Enfield rifle. I stayed in Hartnett's and other houses in the area. A short time after, Martin Conway ordered another I.R.A. man named John Hartigan of Meanus and myself to hold up the local postman bringing the mail from Meanus Post Office to Fedamore and to seize the mail for Fedamore R.I.C. Barracks. The letters addressed to the barracks included one giving the names of officers and men of Bruff Company.

About two days after holding up the postman, while I was in Hartigan's, it was raided by R.I.C., Tans and military. John Hartigan and I managed to escape and were fired on by the enemy as we ran from the house. That night we stayed in Hartigan's of Boher. It had been thought that two girls named who lived in a labourer's cottage nearby, were responsible for the raid on Hartigan's. They were keeping company with the Tans. Martin Conway and six members of the company raided their house one night and took the two girls out. They cut their hair and tarred them. Hartigan and I were on sentry duty while the job was being carried out.

A few days later, Pat Hartigan drove me into Limerick

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in a pony trap. We called to Vickery's of Roches Street where he handed me over to Batt. Laffin and David Hennessy of Killonan. They took me to Killonan where I joined up with the local company. Bill Wall, brother of Fr. Wall of Drumcollogher, and John McCormack, Chairman of the Co. Council, were on the run at the time and were residing in the area. We became great friends and stayed in different houses in the neighbourhood. There was very little activity in the area.

While I was in the locality, Mrs. McCormack, wife of John McCormack, paid a visit to the Women's Employment Exchange in Limerick looking for a maid. She got a girl by the name of \_\_\_\_\_ who started to work for her. She was in Mrs. McCormack's employment for about three weeks when, one Sunday night, Mrs. McCormack's son, who was also on the run, and I called to his mother's house for milk. When coming away we saw \_\_\_\_\_ in conversation with two men in plain clothes. We did not know them. They had been driven out to McCormack's by a jarvey named Benson of Limerick. On the following Sunday night, one man in military uniform arrived, again driven by Benson. I spoke to Benson who told me that the girl was a pal of the Tans and that her real name was \_\_\_\_\_

I reported the matter to Batt Laffin who sent me to his home to collect a small suitcase hidden in a cowshed on his farm. I found the case and took it to Laffin. In the case was a photo of \_\_\_\_\_ A day or two later Laffin handed me a £5 note and a dispatch to bring to the Master of the Union in Tralee. The dispatch was placed on the sole of one of my boots after which a pair of rubber soles was clamped on to the existing soles.

\_\_\_\_\_ had been in the 'Union' in Tralee after \_\_\_\_\_

It was rumoured at the time that she had died there. It afterwards transpired that it was an illegitimate child of hers that had died there. She and her mother left their home near Ardferd, Co. Kerry, a short time later and went to reside in Limerick City where they assumed the name of

I took the train at Killonan and left it at Listowel where I stayed with an uncle of mine named Con Crimmin for the night. He made arrangements for me to be met at Tralee railway station next morning by a porter on duty there. The porter brought me to Kiely's of Well Lane, Tralee. A girl of Kiely's brought me to the Master of the Union. I handed the dispatch to him. He immediately, upon seeing the photograph and reading a description of the girl, confirmed that she was

He told me that if we did not have the girl executed, that some members of the local company there would come to Killonan and shoot her. In the meantime, a guard had been placed on the girl, but before I got back, Mrs. McCormack facilitated her escape by opening a back window through which she managed to gain her freedom and return to Limerick.

After this I got sick and was taken to the Infirmary in Limerick where I was detained for a fortnight. After leaving the Infirmary I stayed for a time at Dave Kiely's of Shannon St., Limerick. Kiely got me a job as baggage porter at the Royal George Hotel. In the course of my duties there I had to visit the railway station to meet the trains. There was very little activity in Limerick at this time, but now and then I was able to pass on information on the movements of the R.I.C. and Black and Tans who visited the hotel or railway station, to Dave Kiely or a man named Cahill, both of whom were members of the local I.R.A. In one instance, while in a local cafe,

I overheard a soldier say that he was to take part in a large round-up in the Caherconlish area on the following morning and that they had received information that the I.R.A. were located in the area. I passed on the information to Kiely and Cahill. As I knew the locality well, they asked me to go there and warn the I.R.A. I obtained a bike and cycled to Batt Laffin of Killonan. Dave Hennessy was there. He sent me to his own house with instructions to tell his servant boy, named Mick McDonnell, to go to Caherconlish to warn the I.R.A. who were located in a large unoccupied house there. I went with him. Near the 'Big House' we were halted by a man on guard. We told him of the proposed round-up. He fired two shots as a signal. We were taken inside where we explained our story to the officer in charge. He had the house evacuated within a few minutes. At least 40 I.R.A. men, all of them armed, were in the 'Big House' that night. At daylight next morning the place was raided by a large number of military, R.I.C. and Black and Tans, but our men had gone. I returned to my job in the hotel that morning.

A short time after the Truce I disarmed a drunken Tan in the hotel of a Colt revolver. Later, with other members of the local I.R.A., I seized a number of R.I.C. tin boxes off the trains.

Signed: Michael Collins

Date: 16th December, 1955

6th December 1955.

Witness: John J. Daly  
(John J. Daly)

