

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

No. **W.S.** 1521

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COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. **W.S.** 1521.

Witness

Michael Walsh,
Churchyard Ave.,
Ballintemple,
Cork.

Identity.

Capt., 'C' Coy., 2nd Battn.,
Cork No. 1 Brigade.

Subject.

Activities 'B' Coy., 2nd Battn.,
Cork No. 1 Bde., 1913-1922.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil.

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BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 1521

STATEMENT BY MICHAEL WALSH

CHURCHYARD AVENUE, BALLINTEMPLE, CO.CORK.

I am a native of Blackrock, Cork, and, since my earliest days, have been associated with Gaelic activities in that district.

I remember attending a meeting held in the city Hall, Cork, in 1913, to establish the Volunteers. The chairman of that meeting was J.J. Walsh, afterwards Postmaster General in the Free State Government. Eoin MacNeill and Roger Casement were also present on that occasion and spoke at the meeting. An effort was made by supporters of the United Irish League to smash up the meeting. These were, eventually, forcibly ejected from the Hall and the proceedings were resumed. I was, on that occasion, one of those present who was handed an enrolment form to fill up by Roger Casement. This I completed and so began my association with the Volunteer movement in Cork city.

We drilled in a hall called The Dún in Queen St., Cork. Our drill instructors were two ex-British army men named Sergeant Major Goodwin and Sergeant Donovan. We used wooden rifles when drilling.

At that time, the officers, so far as I can now remember, were Tomas MacCurtain, Terence McSwiney, Sean O'Sullivan, Captain Talbot Crosby, Harry Donegal, solicitor, and J.F. O'Riordan. The last three mentioned were United Irish League men.

When the Volunteer split came in 1914 we were assembled at the Cornmarket, Cork, where the position was explained to us by, amongst other speakers, Tomas MacCurtain. At that

meeting the vast majority of the Volunteers present decided to take the side of John Redmond. About 150 voted to have nothing to do with Redmond's crowd and there and then formed a separate organisation with the following as officers: Tomas MacCurtain, Terence McSwiney, Sean Sullivan, Paddy Trahey and Sean Scannell. We were known as the Cork City Battalion, Irish Volunteers. Drilling took place weekly in a hall at Fisher St., Cork. We also had occasional 'field days', carrying out manoeuvres and field training generally. There was a fair number of rifles, Lee Enfields and German Mausers, in the city battalion, together with a few revolvers, shotguns and grenades. On the occasion of the funeral of O'Donovan Rossa in Dublin on 1st August 1915, a large contingent of Volunteers from Cork city and county travelled to Dublin by train to take part in the funeral procession. I was one of a party from Cork city. We were armed with Lee Enfield and Mauser rifles. I also attended a review in Limerick city in 1915 at which we carried rifles. The Volunteers on this occasion were reviewed by Captain Monteith and Eoin MacNeill.

About a week before the Rising of Easter 1916, I was, with other Volunteers, on armed guard at the Volunteer Hall, Sheares' St., Cork. Every man on guard carried a rifle. I remember hearing rumours during that week of Tralee town being in a state of expectancy as if something out of the ordinary was about to happen in Kerry, but what this was, I had no idea, nor had I any notion that a Rising was to take place in the very near future. There was, I remember, a certain air of tenseness in the Volunteer Hall that week. We sensed that something was about to happen, but what that was we did not know.

As a result of a mobilisation, I met about 150 of the City Volunteers at Sheares' St. Hall, Cork, early on Easter Sunday morning 1916. Practically every man was armed with a rifle or a shotgun. The rifles appeared to be mostly of the German Mauser type one of which I carried. A quantity of ammunition was handed out to us the previous evening.

At about 8 a.m. on Easter Sunday 1916, we marched to Capwell railway station, Cork, where we entrained for Crookstown, Co. Cork. From Crookstown we marched to Macroom, Co. Cork, via Beal na Blath, a distance of approximately 25 miles. We arrived in Macroom almost as the Angelus was ringing at 6 p.m. En route from Crookstown to Macroom we were joined by various groups of Volunteers from the county, and, as we marched, a party of about 20 R.I.C. on bikes followed us in the rear of our contingent. The country Volunteers were armed with rifles and shotguns, but mostly with the latter. Occasionally on the march we were ordered to fall out for a brief rest. The R.I.C. also halted but did not interfere, being apparently content to observe our movements. However, on one of those halts, the order was given: "Cork Volunteers, man the ditches". We did so and immediately the police dropped their bikes and ran back across the fields fearing that they were about to be attacked.

We proceeded without incident to Macroom and were lined up in The Square of the town. After about an hour or so we were addressed by Sean O'Sullivan, one of our officers, who told us that things had not "panned out" as expected, that we were to return to Cork by train right away. There was a great deal of dissatisfaction at the turn of events, but we all (city men) entrained at Macroom and came back to Cork as instructed. Each man then returned home bringing his gun with him.

On Easter Monday night, 1916, we were ordered to attend the Volunteer Hall, Sheares' St., Cork, unarmed. We had by this time heard of the Rising in Dublin, although the news was not published in the papers until the following Wednesday. So far as I can remember, nothing particular happened on that Monday night. We were, I think, told to disperse and meet in the same place unarmed again on the following (Tuesday) night. On the Tuesday night, Tomas MacCurtain addressed us and said that they had received an ultimatum from the British authorities to the effect that, unless the Volunteers surrendered their weapons, the city would be shelled by artillery. Those words were used by MacCurtain when he addressed us that Tuesday night. I am quite certain he said this, but I am not sure whether the occasion was on the Monday or the Tuesday night. I rather think it was on the Tuesday night. A heated discussion then took place; many of us present were against handing up our guns. A vote was taken for or against surrendering our arms and the majority decided not to comply with the British proposal.

On the following night (Wednesday, I think) we again met in the Volunteer Hall. Tomas MacCurtain and Terence McSwiney were present, as was the Most Rev. Dr. Cohalan, then Bishop of Cork. The latter did not address the meeting but was in consultation with MacCurtain, McSwiney and other Volunteer officers. On the night afterwards we were again instructed to attend the Hall. I happened to be on duty in a corridor when a British army officer named Captain Dickie arrived in uniform with Tomas MacCurtain and Terence McSwiney. The two latter had discussion with the British officer and after some time the latter left the premises. MacCurtain then told us that he had a guarantee from the British that, if our arms were handed up, the British authorities would be satisfied

if the guns were placed in the custody of the Lord Mayor of Cork (Butterfield) and that the Volunteers in Cork city would not be molested if that were done. I cannot remember whether the British proposal was put to a vote of the Volunteers present or not, but I do know that a number of Volunteers did surrender their arms to the Lord Mayor. My recollection is that the decision was left to the men themselves by MacCurtain. I can recollect no occasion during the week in question when it was decided by a majority vote of the Volunteers present in the hall in Sheares St. to hand up their arms. I am definitely of the opinion that Tomas MacCurtain left it to each individual to act in the matter as he thought fit. I was one of those who kept my rifle and did not hand it over to the Lord Mayor.

Following the handing over of some guns to the custody of the Lord Mayor, British military raided the store in which the arms were kept and took them away to Cork military barracks. Volunteer officers and others were arrested and deported. So much for British guarantees! Before handing over their rifles a number of Volunteers removed the bolts, thereby rendering them useless.

Following the arrest of the Volunteer leaders, the movement was in a state of chaos in Cork city, but, some months afterwards, (July 1916, I think), reorganisation of the Volunteers commenced and I attended a meeting in the Volunteer Hall, Sheares St. Cork, at which Donal Barrett, a local Volunteer officer, discussed the question of picking up the threads of the organisation again.

In the latter half of 1916, I was enrolled a member of the I.R.B. by Donal Barrett, and early in 1917 (February or March), I attended a meeting in the Thomas Ashe Hall, Father Mathew

Quay, Cork, at which officers of the Cork city battalion (having been released from British jails) and men representing different areas in the city were present. At that meeting it was decided amongst other matters to form a Volunteer company in my own district of Blackrock, Cork. That decision was implemented at a subsequent meeting held in Ballynure, Blackrock, which was addressed by Sean Scannell, a member of the battalion staff. About 40 to 50 men from the Blackrock district attended that meeting and the following company officers were elected. Company captain - Mick Mehigan; 1st Lieutenant - myself. A few months later, Mick Mehigan devoted most of his attention to the Sinn Fein movement, with the result that I was appointed company captain. "Pakey" Mahony, a well-known boxer at that time, was, I remember, a Lieutenant in our company which was known as B/Company, 2nd Battalion, Cork No. 1 Brigade. The company area covered the districts Blackrock, Ballintemple, Ballynure, Ballinsheen and portion of the Boreenmanna Road. It was bounded on the north and east by the River Lee, on the south by the Douglas river, and on the west by the city proper. The area could almost be described as a peninsula. Portion of the district was inhabited by many wealthy Cork merchants, practically all of whom were hostile to our movement, many of them actively so, in the sense that they supplied information to British sources about Volunteer activities and the whereabouts of prominent men in the Volunteer movement in the Blackrock district. As a result, it became necessary for us to take drastic action in several instances, details of which I will furnish later in this statement.

It would be about the latter half of the year 1917 when, on instructions from Battalion Headquarters, I organised night raids on private houses occupied, as a rule, by retired British

army officers or by people known as the 'gentry' class, many of whom resided in B/Company district and all of whom were antagonistic to the cause. The purpose of these raids was to augment our small store of arms which, at that time, consisted of a rifle which I had, a revolver or two and a few shotguns. Information had been received that the R.I.C. intended to call to these houses and collect the guns, and the raids were carried out by us with a view to forestalling the proposed action by the R.I.C.

Three or four men usually took part in those raids. Occasionally one of the party (myself) might carry a revolver, but, generally speaking, we were unarmed. We were successful in obtaining quite a few sporting guns and revolvers and in no case did we meet with active opposition from the people whose houses we raided.

During the year 1918, when the British Government proposed to apply conscription in Ireland, we had a large influx of new recruits to our company. When the crisis passed, the vast majority of these recruits left us with a company strength of about 50 men. Organisation and training formed the major part of the company's activities during 1918, but, early in 1919, armed raids on all quarries in the company area were carried out and quantities of gunpowder and gelignite seized. This was passed on to the battalion quartermaster. The gunpowder was used extensively in the making of cartridges for shotguns.

At the same period a forge owned by Daniel O'Driscoll, Blackrock, was taken over, where about 12 men from the company were engaged for three weeks preparing and drilling caps for hand grenades.

Early in the year 1919 my home was raided by R.I.C. at

night and I was arrested and taken prisoner to the military barracks, Cork. From there I was sent to Belfast Gaol where Sean Hayes, afterwards T.D. for West Cork, was in charge of a large number of republican prisoners then in that gaol. (Sean was, of course, himself a prisoner). I remember Eoin O'Duffy being one of the prisoners there at that time. I took part in the hunger-strike of prisoners and, after eleven days' strike, was brought to the Union Hospital, Belfast. I was about a week there when I was released. On my return to Cork, I resumed duty with B/Company, 2nd Battalion, as 1st Lieutenant. In my absence in gaol, John Donovan was appointed captain in my place. John Dullea was then 2nd Lieut.

In the late summer of 1919, a party of eight men from B/Company, some armed with revolvers, raided the Cork, Bandon and Passage railway stores at St. Patrick's Bridge, Cork. This operation took place about 5 p.m. and was carried out on the stores which happened to be adjacent to Union Quay R.I.C. Barracks. Railway porters helped us to unload the goods which were in wagons for transportation to the military forts at the mouth of Cork Harbour. Gas engine parts and valuable equipment, such as drilling machines, mechanics' tools, and a lathe, which proved very useful for grenade making, were loaded on to a waiting lorry by us and taken away almost under the eyes of the R.I.C. in the barracks nearby. The materials captured were passed on to the battalion engineer. The operation was carried out without incident.

During 1919 men from B/Company were engaged in the construction of a dugout at Lakelands, Blackrock, for the storage of petrol for brigade purposes. Upwards of a dozen men were engaged periodically on this work of converting a large barn, outoffices and stores into a suitable storage depot. Unfortunately, some word of our activities must have

reached the British because, before the job was completed, police and military arrived at Lakelands one day and burned the place down. Luckily enough, none of us was on the job when the British forces arrived.

On 24th June 1920, R.I.C. Barracks situated about two miles east of Cork city were evacuated by the police who were dispersed to Union Quay and Douglas R.I.C. Barracks. About 15 men of the company set fire to the building three days after its evacuation and completely destroyed it. In the latter half of 1920 a large party of Black and Tans, about 70, surprised about eight of us on the old Blackrock Road about 7 p.m. one night. The Tans called on us to halt. Two of our men complied with the order and were taken into custody. The remainder of us made our escape. When the Tans observed us escaping, they opened fire, wounding one of our party in the leg. We were pursued from Old Blackrock Road to Church Road, a distance of $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles, the Tans leaving their cars and following us on foot firing as they went. At Church Road we succeeded in getting clear away.

On the night of the incident to which I have referred, we were engaged collecting a levy which was imposed on different merchants and others in Cork by orders of the brigade. We were supplied with a list of names of those on whom we were to call and the amount of the levy in each case. We learned afterwards that the occupiers of some of the houses in which the levy was collected had informed police headquarters about us; as a result, we received orders from the brigade to burn the houses of those people. One night, about 7.30 p.m., about 16 of us from the company prepared to burn the house of an informer named Hill, a city merchant. Some of the men acted as scouts, whilst others of us ordered the occupants out of the house and proceeded to sprinkle the place with petrol

preparatory to setting it on fire. We had not completed this task when scouts warned us of the approach of R.I.C. and Black and Tans and we had no option but to make out getaway as quickly as possible.

The following morning at about 6 a.m. we entered the house of another man named Young, one of those who had given information to the police and, having ordered the occupants outside, burned it to the ground. At about 12 noon the same day, we returned to Hill's house and completed the job of burning it too.

During this period (mid 1920) whilst about 13 of B/Company myself included, were engaged at revolver practice one evening at Skehard in the Blackrock district, we were surprised by a large number of Black and Tans who immediately opened fire wounding one of our men named John Cotter. He received a bullet wound in the shoulder. However, we all got clear away. Cotter was treated at the South Infirmary, Cork, by Doctor D.J. Buckley, M.O.H., Blackrock, Cork, and recovered from his wound.

Very frequent raiding of mails was carried out during 1920 and, up to the Truce of July 1921. Postmen and post offices were held up at frequent intervals. We learned from captured correspondence of the presence of a large hostile element in the Blackrock area. Incriminating letters were passed on to the battalion intelligence officer. Also in 1920, I recollect taking part in a raid which almost had disastrous consequences for those of us concerned. We received information that valuable maps, which would be of great use to the brigade, were located at Ballea Castle, Carrigaline, Co. Cork, about five miles south of Cork city. The occupiers were an ex-British naval officer and an ex-British army officer. We received instructions from the 2nd Battalion, O/C., Mick Murphy, to raid the castle and get the maps.

One night during curfew, which was in operation from 10 p.m. to 3 a.m. at the time, six of us, armed with revolvers, set out by car for Carrigaline. On arrival at the Castle we knocked at the door and were admitted. We then collected the maps, much against the wishes of the two ex-British officers who, however, confined themselves to verbal protests, and we made our way back to the city by car. On the road back, the car skidded and our driver received a broken leg. I, too, was injured, but not seriously. One of our lads went on into the city and located Mick Murphy; he came with a van and removed the driver and myself to the South Infirmary, Cork. On our way we met a military lorry on patrol duty. A chase ensued, but, by taking various turns unknown to our pursuers, we escaped capture. The maps were subsequently passed on to the brigade.

A successful raid for petrol was carried out on an oil company's depot in Old Victoria Road, Blackrock. This raid was carried out by picked men from the seven companies in the 2nd Battalion. Six of us from B/Company took part, most of whom were armed with revolvers. The parties proceeded by motor cars at night to the oil depot and succeeded in taking away about 400 gallons of petrol. This was put in a dump (the whereabouts of which I cannot now remember) for use by our motor transport. We encountered no enemy opposition on the occasion.

On various occasions our company lay in ambush positions at night at Ballinlough, Old Blackrock Road and Church Road, Blackrock. We were armed with revolvers and shotguns, the intention being to ambush police and Black and Tans patrols which, occasionally, patrolled the district by night on foot. For some reason or other, we never succeeded in having a crack at these patrols. On the nights we lay in wait for them

they failed to appear. It is possible and most likely that some information of our presence may have been conveyed to the British by some of their many sympathisers in our area. This, in my opinion, was the explanation for our failure to get to grips with the patrols.

On 1st January 1921, the 2nd Battalion officers staged an ambush on Black and Tans and police at Parnell Bridge in Cork city. On this occasion the men taking part were battalion officers and a few picked men from the companies comprising the 2nd Battalion. I was the representative from B/Company. Prior to the ambush I was called to a meeting held at the South Monastery Schools where details of the operation were discussed. Mick Murphy, 2nd Battalion Commandant, was in charge. At 7 p.m. in the evening a large party of Black and Tans usually left Union Quay Barracks and proceeded on foot down Union Quay and across Parnell Bridge. Having crossed the bridge where it meets the South Mall, the party split up into groups and went to various parts of the city. It was decided to ambush the Tans as they approached the bridge and before they dispersed into small parties. About 15 of our men were in position near Parnell Bridge and opposite Union Quay. We were armed with revolvers, grenades and a Lewis gun. I was armed with a revolver and was stationed near Parnell Bridge. The Tans duly made their appearance at the time expected, viz: 7 p.m. and, as they approached the bridge, we opened fire on them with all we had. They were taken completely by surprise and those not killed or wounded ran helter-skelter back to Union Quay Barracks firing wildly from rifles as they ran. Some took cover and replied to our fire. They were machine-gunned all the way up Union Quay by a Volunteer named Healy who operated our Lewis gun on the occasion and who was, incidentally, an ex-British army gunner.

We suffered no casualties that evening and I regret I cannot now remember what casualties we inflicted on the Tans. I do know they admitted some, but to what extent I cannot say. The engagement in question lasted about quarter of an hour altogether. Amongst those who took part in the attack were: Commandant Mick Murphy (in charge), Donal O'Donoghue, Denis Hegarty, Pat Collins, William Aherne, Tadhg Sullivan and Healy. I cannot recollect the names of the others.

In the summer of 1920, we received information that a steamer was being loaded in Cork city with military equipment. It was decided to hold up the vessel in the vicinity of Blackrock Castle, about two miles down the River Lee, as this was the most suitable spot for bringing the goods ashore. It so happened that the skipper of the vessel was a member of our company. We had a few lads in Murrough House, Blackrock, to act as lookout scouts. Fourteen lorries and vans were commandeered and a number of fishing boats were held in readiness. As the vessel approached, the fishing boats rowed out to intercept her. She was boarded by a few of us armed with revolvers and the work of transferring the goods ashore then proceeded. The military stores were taken shore in fishing boats, loaded on to the waiting lorries and taken to a selected spot for distribution. The operation lasted from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. being carried out in full view from a wide distance.

The material captured included military boots, shirts, underwear, medical supplies and equipment. As the last of our lorries was about to leave, scouts reported that military were approaching from the city. The lorries immediately left and had just rounded Blackrock Castle when the military arrived. They raided Murrough's House which was occupied by some of our scouts and opened fire on one man who was escaping. This

delay enabled the last of our lorries to get away. On the following night the captured material was distributed to various I.R.A. units. About 30 men of B/Company took part in this operation.

Many raids were carried out by us on the trains carrying military stores to the forts at Cork Harbour. The terminus of the Cork, Blackrock and Passage railway lay in B/Company district and we were kept informed of movements of military equipment by rail, by agents of ours employed on the railway as porters, drivers, firemen and suchlike. From time to time we raided the stores at the Cork terminus. Then again we held up the trains between stations and removed the stuff on commandeered cars. It was usual for the driver and fireman to arrange with us to pull up the train at a specified place en route, when we would take off the military stores. This was done by daylight in almost every instance; about 10 men of B/Company took part, some of us armed with revolvers. As well as being of nuisance value these raids were the means of supplying our battalion and the brigade in general with valuable military equipment - tools of various kinds useful to our engineers, oils, bedding and general supplies. I, myself, invariably took charge on these raids.

In late 1920, an engineering class was organised in the company. The battalion engineer gave instruction to five selected men in the making of explosives. The men worked in a workshop situated in Connolly's yard, Ballinlough, where a foundry was set up. To equip the engineering shop we raided the Cork Power Station (which operated the tram service) for electrical equipment. Cork Harbour Board premises was also raided for tools and drills.

Early in 1921, an armed raid was carried out by our company

on Messrs. Ford's Factory, and a large quantity of pig-iron scrap iron and moulding sand taken away. This was brought by us to Cobh Junction where it was handed up to men of the Knockraha company (4th Battalion, East Cork). In Knockraha (about 7 miles east of Cork city) there was a bomb factory operated by men of the Knockraha Company under the command of Martin Corry, the present Fianna Fáil Dáil deputy for East Cork.

In addition to the activities of our company which I have detailed, there were others of a minor nature carried out continuously during 1920-21 which were, however, an important feature of the fight in Cork. I refer to the cutting of telephone wires, the seizure of cars, motor cycles and bicycles from wellknown loyalists, the constant raiding of mails and the raiding for arms in private houses. These activities continued unceasingly up to the Truce of July 1921.

In May 1921, due to continual raids by military and Tans on my home which they finally burned down, I decided to leave the district and go to the flying column in West Cork. With three others of the company I was waiting at Blackrock for a small cargo boat to take us up the river to the west. I had placed my revolver and clothes made up in a parcel at the slip where the boat was to call. She was due about noon and, as she hadn't appeared at that time, we decided to go into a nearby publichouse to escape being observed standing about. We were about five minutes inside only, when the Tans rushed in by the front and back doors. We tried to escape, but were covered by rifles outside the door. The Tans were accompanied by a particularly obnoxious R.I.C. man named Sergeant Kelly, who had been stationed in our district previously. He identified me and I was taken prisoner to Union Quay Barracks, Cork. In the barracks I was badly beaten up. I was knocked

to the ground, knelt on and my moustache burned off. I was then thrown into a cell and that same night was blindfolded, taken out and put in a lorry with a party of 'Tans'. When the bandage was removed from my eyes, I found myself near my own home (which had already been burned out by the Tans). My captors knocked at neighbours' houses inquiring for my mother. She came out and was asked was I her son; she said I was. I was then blindfolded again and put back in the lorry.

I should have stated that when I was searched in Union Quay a letter was found in my pocket addressed to Paddy Sullivan, a Volunteer. The Tans continually persecuted me to tell who this Paddy Sullivan was, while I maintained the name was an assumed one and I did not know any Paddy Sullivan

to tell about Sullivan and where he was to be found. I made no reply. I next heard the telephone ring. A man in the room answered and said: "You are from the 'Cork Examiner' you say. A dead body found in the Mardyke; all right, we will investigate".

After further questioning me, without avail, the bandage was taken off my eyes. I was put into a lorry and brought to a cell in the Cork Bridewell. One of the occupants of the cell was a very much wanted Volunteer named Peter Donovan of C/Coy. 2nd Battalion. He had been arrested some time that night and had given his name as Richard Andrews. He had not been identified. He was, subsequently, charged with a breach of the curfew regulations and sentenced to six months' imprisonment. I told Peter all that had taken place.

The following morning I was transferred to Cork military barracks where I was interrogated by three British intelligence officers named Henderson, Hendy and Hammond (these were later shot by the Cork I.R.A.) The whole interrogation concerned Sullivan. I said the name might be an assumed one, it might be Sexton, I knew no Sullivan at all. One of the officers (a one-armed man) then attacked me. While the two others held me he tried to force a small grenade into my mouth. I was in a very bad state when they left, promising to "have another session" with me the following day. In the early hours of the morning, Very Rev. Canon O'Regan, chaplain to the barracks, came to me. I told him all that had taken place. He was horrified, but said there was nothing he could do to stop that kind of thing. Shortly afterwards, I was removed to what was known as the "Cage", also in Cork military barracks. Here I met Peter Donovan again. After about a fortnight in the "Cage" I was transferred to Spike Island with 50 or 60 other prisoners, where we were for some months. I was then removed with others

to Maryboro' Jail from where I was released on the occasion of the general release of prisoners in December 1921.

On my release I resumed I.R.A. connections with B/Company, and, on the outbreak of civil war, I fought on the republican side.

In August 1922, three of us attacked a launch containing 17 British troops in the Lee near Blackrock Castle. These soldiers were stationed in the forts at the entrance to Cork Harbour. I had a Lewis gun and my companions had Lee Enfield rifles. We opened fire from the bank of the river as the launch passed up. The British admitted the loss of three killed, seven seriously wounded and four wounded, but not seriously. The matter was subsequently raised in the British House of Commons.

After taking part in several engagements with Free State troops, I was arrested at midnight Mass on Christmas Day 1922, in Blackrock. I was brought to Cork Jail and from there to Mountjoy Gaol, Dublin, where I took part in a hunger-strike of prisoners. From Mountjoy I was transferred to Harepark Camp, the Curragh, where the hunger-strike was continued for a further seventeen days. I was finally released in the summer of 1923.

Signed: Michael Walsh

Date: 25-10-56

Witness: J. Gorman

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