

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 1549

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1549.

Witness

John Moran,
Muredach's Terrace,
Ballina,
Co. Mayo.

Identity.

Battalion and Brigade Intelligence Officer,
North Mayo Brigade.

Subject.

Activities of Ballina Company, Irish
Volunteers, Co. Mayo, 1916-1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil.

File No S.2868

Form B.S.M. 2

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STATEMENT BY JOHN MORAN,

Muredach's Terrace, Ballina, Co. Mayo.

I was born in Killala about 1875 and served my time as a plasterer.

As a young fellow I went to work in Glasgow and joined the Irish Republican Brotherhood in the Public Park 1892 or 1893. The oath was administered by Pat Curry (a nephew of Peter O'Neill Crowley) and Dick McGrath, a Dublinman.

I returned to Ballina in 1906. I was a member of the Irish Volunteers from the beginning. Frank Flynn, a commercial traveller who once had a shop in Longford, Phelim Colleary, Tom Ruane, William Lydon and Dominick Molloy are the principal names I remember in the Volunteers in the early days.

In the period before 1916 I remember an I.R.B. man named O'Sullivan visiting us regularly and collecting ammunition which we had obtained from various sources. Murty Gilmartin, who worked in Ahearn's hardware shop, used to get the ammunition.

Between 1912 and 1914 I was working on the New Church at Cornboy in the Carrowteige district.

In the Sinn Féin Hall in Ballina the I.R.B. had a room. One evening a man named Foy of Belderrig, whom I did not know previously, came to the room, perhaps through Colleary. He told us that a man who had been on a Congested District Board ship joined the

German Navy and that he brought some rifles ashore from a submarine and gave them to him and a chap named Ruane, as far as I can remember. Colleary, Molloy and myself were in the room with him. I do not remember the date but it was after 1916. We understood from Foy that he could let us have the arms, and I think we decided to get a boat from the local lads at Carrowteige and bring the stuff to Bartra island near Ballina.

It was arranged for me to meet Foy at Paddy McGrath's publichouse in Pulathomas. The day I arrived he wasn't there. I slept in McGrath's hay loft that night and left early next morning (unknown to the McGraths) and made my way to the main Belmullet-Ballycastle road, where I met Foy. He did not seem to want me to go to Killigalligan in daylight. He gave as his reason that there was a suspect named Doherty, a teacher in Carrowteige; that this Doherty had some organisation of his own. Foy showed me a green membership card of this organisation, which was the Ancient Order of Hibernians, but I know nothing more about it and never heard anything.

In the end I was brought to John Ruane's of Killigalligan, where I had to stay hidden all day. That night Foy, Ruane and a man named Geraghty brought me to a boat. The night was pitch dark. I could see nothing and had no idea where I was going. I don't remember any conversation that took place. We were in the boat a very long time and when we landed I was told I was on Kidd island. To this day I do not know where Kidd island is. After we landed, one fellow took a rifle from behind a rock. I said "we will get men

and a boat to take them round to Ballina^m, but they replied that the local men were good enough to tackle the job and that we would have to get men and a boat from Belderrig. I agreed, as I was ashamed to go back to Ballina without the rifles.

We returned to Ruane's, where it was decided that Foy would go to his comrades in Belderrig and get a boat to go round to the dump during the week and let us know in Ballina.

I had money with me for the job to pay the boatman and other expenses. Dominick Molloy advanced £100. This was the money I had with me, or some of it. I forget how much I had. I gave Ruane £5 and about £12, or maybe more, to Foy.

I returned to Ballina and expected word from them, but none came. At last Ruane came to Ballina and stayed in Dominick Molloy's house. This Ruane was a forward kind of fellow, an ex shop assistant. He had no information for us and no word came from Foy.

We got suspicious, and one Sunday Colleary, Molloy and Lydon, who is now in Canada, and myself cycled to Belderrig, where we met Foy and other Belderrig fellows who were to take the boat to Killigalligan and Bartra. We met in the schoolyard and talked for hours. I suggested going to Killigalligan but Foy and his brother put obstacles in the way, so we cycled back to Ballina.

Foy left the district and I heard he was working in Guinness's brewery in Dublin. I went to Dublin to see him about the money he got from us and I traced him

to the Ballina Hotel near the Broadstone railway station, but he probably heard I was looking for him as he left in a hurry. I came back to Ballina and reported to the others. I did not see or meet him afterwards.

I got the cash back from Ruane but I don't remember what explanation he gave about the whole affair. He is probably in America. Dominick Molloy got all his money back from us.

When in Dublin I got in touch with Mick Collins about Foy. I met himself and Harry Boland in the Carmelite Church in Terenure. I tried to get arms from them but got nothing. That is all I remember about the Killigalligan affair.

I was arrested in 1921 and brought to Castlebar jail. I was taken from there to Galway with a number of others. The lorries stopped in Ballinrobe, and when I waved to a chap named Micky Jordan who was standing in the doorway of a shop, an R.I.C. man struck me in the mouth with his rifle. It was after the Headfort ambush and they were very nervy. We were brought to Eglinton R.I.C. barrack that night, very exhausted. We gave all our cash to the R.I.C. to buy tea and bread. There were about twenty-five of us from Ballina, Castlebar and Ballinrobe in the cells.

We were taken out, lined up and marched to the jail. I was in the front file. It was pouring rain, and as there was no room in the jail we were marched back. I was in the rear coming back and was put into the last cell. About midnight R.I.C. men came round shouting, "Is there anyone here who can tell us who killed Armstrong?" (a Sergt. in the R.I.C. who was shot in

Ballina near the Bank of Ireland). We heard loud roaring from the first cell. The R.I.C. were taking out the prisoners one by one, stripping them and beating them with batons and belts, then taking them back to the cells exhausted and bleeding. This went on for an hour. They were picking out the Ballina fellows.

We were praying in our cell. I told the lads to get ready and gave my coat to Martin Harte of Ballinrobe. I stood at the door of the cell so that I would be first, because I was afraid my nerves would not stand it if I had to wait long for my turn, so I thought it better to get it over. Three R.I.C. came in and picked a big chap named Matt Crinnane of Ballinrobe. He came back all bleeding and smashed up. They then took Matt Byrne, a plumber, but he came back unmarked. Next they took Frank Flynn - his back was in a shocking state - large furrows of blood and ridges of torn flesh. When "Do" Ruane saw what was happening, he took blood off his brother's back, rubbed his own face with it and was not taken out at all.

An Army Officer appeared from somewhere and stopped the beatings. We were taken to Renmore Military Barracks, where our wounds were dressed by R.A.M.C. orderlies, and from Renmore we were taken to the Town Hall where a number of us were picked out for Ballykinlar Camp. I was released, through the intervention of the Bishop of Killala, Dr. Naughton, for whom I used work. I came back to Ballina and rejoined my comrades, and shortly afterwards I met a Missionary Father who wanted to meet the column and boys 'on the run' in order to hear

their Confessions. This I arranged for him to do,
for which he was very pleased.

Signed: John M. ...

Date: Nov 30th - 1956.

Witness: [Signature]
(Investigator) [Signature]

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