

**ORIGINAL**

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21  
No. W.S. 1742

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1,742.

**Witness**

Patrick Hearne,  
31, Barker St.,  
Waterford.

**Identity.**

Comdt. Waterford City Battalion, Fianna Éireann.

**Subject.**

Fianna Éireann, Waterford City, 1912 - 1921.

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

Nil.

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NO. W.S. 1742

STATEMENT BY PATRICK HEARN,  
31, Barker Street, Waterford.

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I was born in Waterford City in 1898. My father was from Dublin and my mother from Waterford. I was educated at the Christian Brothers' Schools, Manor Street and Mount Sion, Waterford. I left school at the age of 15 to take up employment as a Junior Clerk at Messrs Hearne & Cahill's Boot Factory, Broad Street, Waterford. I had then passed my Junior Grade Intermediate Examinations. Senior Grade, being the highest standard to be attained, could not be done by any pupil until he had passed 16 years.

I joined Fianna Éireann at its first meeting held in the Gaelic League rooms, William Street, Waterford, I believe late in 1912 or 1913. This was presided over by Liam Mellows and some of us had been brought there by Liam Walsh who was then I.R.B. Centre in Waterford, and later Brigade O/C., Irish Volunteers. Liam Mellows gave us several lectures dealing with past History, explained the purpose for which the Fianna was being organised and left to carry on organising in other areas. During his absence, several men took an interest in the branch, and preliminary training was introduced. Some of those who took an interest in those early days were Seán Matthews, Liam Walsh, Peadar Woods, Paddy Burke, all of whom held rank in the Volunteers of a later date and in the Irish Republican Army of 1920 and 1921.

To understand how difficult it was to develop even a youth organisation of national tendencies in Waterford, it would be necessary to have some idea of what that unit would have to contend with and the nature of its opposition. Waterford City was known as a garrison town and housed British troops in two barracks. It also had stations occupied by Royal Irish Constabulary at five other points.

Most of the poorer class depended on relatives (who had joined the British Army) for their support and, having had no national education, were intensely loyal to British Rule.

A very strong branch of Baden Powell Boy Scouts organisation flourished here and was helped and encouraged from all angles as it was really a training ground for future soldiers of the British Empire. The general public frowned on any organisation which did not flaunt the "Union Jack" at its head. This was the atmosphere into which the first branch of Fianna Éireann was born.

Our unit designated as 'An Cead Sluagh', and about twenty strong, was allowed the use of a room in the Gaelic League for its meetings and classes, and the use of the Gaelic Field for training. A training circular was issued from Headquarters in Dublin periodically which, together with what Liam Mellows could impart during his odd calls to Waterford, constituted the basis of our training.

Each member had to equip himself with all accessories and uniform at his own expense and devote two nights per week to training. The first public parade was held in June, 1913, and consisted of about twenty members in uniform who marched in military formation to the Feis held by An Connradh at the Courthouse Grounds.

About this time a man named Thomas McDonald became a member. He had been prominent in the organisation then known as 'The Ancient Order of Hibernians' (A.O.H.) and we naturally accepted all instructions from him as to us lads he was a man of Experience. He was actually a member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, a fact I was not aware of until 1920. As our organisation became stronger it was necessary to procure other quarters, and, not having funds, we were very much handicapped; but the Irish National Forresters came to

our aid and gave us the use of their rooms, a few nights per week.

Through the organising ability of Thomas McDonald we accumulated some funds and eventually secured new accommodation about the end of 1913. Two more young men became members, one named Thomas Barr and one John Walsh and in a short time both were appointed as 1st and 2nd Lieutenants respectively, and our unit was divided into sections, squads and a Company. When war broke out in 1914, Thomas Barr was given a commission in the British Army (2nd Lieutenant). One could secure this position in the British Forces easily at that time; the only qualification necessary was to ride a motor bicycle and you were automatically a dispatch rider with 2nd Lieutenant rank.

John Walsh was taken out of the Fianna by his father (who was the proprietor of a weekly paper "The Munster Express") when he, Mr. Walsh, realised that the Fianna was a truly national organisation opposed to Redmond's policy of which he (Mr. Walsh) was a great advocate.

John Walsh succeeded Thomas Barr as O/C., Fianna with rank of Lieutenant at this time. Some British Army text books were secured and grading tests were set out for all members. The programme of training was compiled by the Governing Committee of our branch which was then designated as "The District Council" and consisted of President, Thomas McDonald; Vice-President, James Coogan; Secretary, W. New; Treasurer, Joseph Tobin, together with the two members who held Lieutenant rank.

The two military barracks were at this time occupied by the 72nd Royal Field Artillery commanded by Colonel Tristram. I cultivated the friendship of two British soldiers at this time - one named

Evans and one named Jack Fisher and as both were N.C.Os, I was able to acquire a lot of information from them and by showing an interest in military training they were always anxious to teach me. By this means I was able to learn the Army methods of Communication in the field, which, in those days, were semaphore signalling (two flags), morse (one flag), and the heliograph (later the morse lamp), infantry tactics and training, quite a lot about their artillery and field training for same. Training circulars were available from our Headquarters in Dublin; so with all this material at our disposal tests were set out by our Council which enabled them to classify all members in 1st, 2nd and 3rd class grades. Thus if membership increases warranted N.O.Cs, or if these holding N.C.O. ranks left, we were always in a position to fill the gaps with those who had graduated to Grade 1.

All the time available around this period was devoted to training and military exercises (to the greatest degree our officers and N.C.Os. could themselves attain by study). By the end of 1914 the Volunteer Movement had split and we found our unit working with The Irish Volunteer Section which had broken from the main body which was then known as The Irish National Volunteers and who followed the policy of John Redmond which advocated allegiance to England.

In 1915 a monthly magazine was issued from our Headquarters, Dublin, edited by Percy Reynolds, and to which Liam Mellows regularly contributed articles. This journal reached here regularly and we were constantly in touch with the Dublin District Council of the Fianna to which we were affiliated. Both Liam Mellows and Eamon Martin were members of the Council; and as Liam had then been appointed Irish Volunteer organiser in the provinces we did not see very much of him from then onwards.

A convention of some kind had been organised in Dublin by, I think, the National Volunteers around Easter 1915, and we availed of the train to send a unit of about thirty members from our branch to Dublin. Some of the National Volunteer officers did not like the idea of having our unit travelling on the same train simply because our flag was the Tricolour. A pipers' band of the Dublin branch of Fianna met us at Kingsbridge; and, with the Tricolour leading, we marched to Surrey House, Leinster Road, Rathmines, which was where "Madam" (Countess Markievicz) lived, where we were entertained and were enabled to discuss all matters relevant to our organisation and visit Camden Street branch to see how matters were being controlled from there.

I believe this was the first time the Tricolour was carried as a standard at the head of any unit in Dublin's streets. In fact, I have a recollection that the Countess herself (she was at Kingsbridge with the pipers' band) insisted on carrying it herself for part of the march.

On coming home from Dublin in 1915, our District Council set about their work more seriously. There was greater concentration on training, recruiting etc; and as all the bands in Waterford City were of the Imperialistic trend (with the exception of the Irish National Forresters' Pipers' Band) we decided to build up a pipers' band, with the help and co-operation of the Forresters and the great work of one of our members (Thomas Walsh afterwards killed in action), we had a well-trained pipers' band of twelve before Easter 1916. We were working in close co-operation with the Irish Volunteer Unit during this period and were in close touch with Headquarters, having attended the Fianna Congress in July 1915. Training was progressing smoothly and the Sluaghs were firmly established.

We had promised at Surrey House in 1915, in response to Madam's desire, that we would again as a unit, with its own band, return to Dublin at Easter 1916. Everything was in readiness for our journey by rail on Easter Sunday 1916. If our President had any information of the Insurrection he would not have permitted all arrangements to be made for this journey and I am sure he did not know anything about it, because we finished our preparations on Saturday night, and on Sunday morning all trains were cancelled, and on reaching our own Headquarters all our drums were completely destroyed having had all the skins ripped with knives.

Immediately following the Easter of 1916 several of the Irish Volunteer leaders here were arrested and deported, including Liam Walsh, Seán Matthews, P. Brazil.

After the Rising we lost quite a few members but we counteracted this by spreading out from the City and making the initial contacts in other districts with a view to establishing branches there.

In the meantime the Conscription programme was advocated by Britain and when their recruiting campaign began we had our band rebuilt and we specialised in upsetting most of their recruiting meetings by arranging our parades and route marches so that we would clash with them. The 72nd Royal Field Artillery were ordered to ~~leave~~ France at this time so one very useful avenue of training was closed to us: but a second one opened because training of the Royal Irish Constabulary with rifles plus bayonet practice and range practice started, and we could be close observers at the necessary times to absorb the instructions etc., and transmit same to our own members, although hurleys or wooden guns were the only weapons available for training then.

In the course of keeping an eye on the R.I.C. at this period (1917 and '18) it came to our notice that two men were detailed to patrol roads leading into Waterford at night time. These men travelled on horseback and carried swords attached to their saddles. (I note here the names of two of those, one Constable Quinlisk, the other Constable Hart. Quinlisk was the father of Quinlisk the spy who was afterwards executed in Cork by the I.R.A., and Hart was the policeman who worked with the British soldiers in a raid on my home in 1921).

Work of the type necessary for training had to be intensified during 1918, because of the Conscription threat, and many young lads and girls joined various organisations to fight against it; thus we had to add a course of the First Aid to our programme, attend lectures and teach same. But, needless to relate, when the danger passed on so did most of those members.

The General Election of December 1918 taxed us to the limit as we were relied upon to furnish the Band for all election meetings. This being a newly organised Brass and Reed Band was the only one that could be used by our party in these times. Distribution of Election literature and posters was mostly done by our organisation and at most times protective units of Irish Volunteers had to be provided and all the work had to be done late at night.

Our branch had been making very definite progress up to 1918 when it received its first serious setback; the circumstances were as follows. Early in 1917 a man who was employed as a waiter in a local Hotel who had only recently arrived from Dublin applied for membership of the Fianna: his name was McEnri and he gradually gained some popularity. He was able to satisfy our Council that he was from the Dublin area and could give genuine proof that he was



acquainted with many of our Dublin officers at the time, so he was accepted. Now, one of our regulations was, that any N.C.O. or officer who believed he was good enough or better than these senior to him could request that the Council set an examination for the purpose of establishing which person was most capable to hold the rank; and the person who, as the result of the examination, was best qualified would be then promoted to the grade concerned, (should he be junior to it) or confirmed in his existing rank on the result of the examination (if he already held the senior rank.)

As a result of McEnri's promptings, the demand was made for an examination by two members who held ranks of Lieutenant. As I was then acting as Captain my position was, therefore, challenged. I offered (to avoid such disunity as seemed then apparent) to accept transfer to the Irish Volunteers, but our O/C., F. McDonald, refused to grant it and I, therefore, had no alternative but to accept his ruling. The examination never did materialise as the officers concerned, together with about twelve of the older members, left the unit with McEnri, and he established a branch of the National Guard, as he called it. This organisation was supposed to exist in Dublin and was similar to Fianna but of senior or more advanced status. This unit was extinct in about nine months and most of the members who had left Fianna joined the Irish Volunteers. At a later date when the Countess Markievicz came to Waterford at our invitation and the above matter was discussed with her, she told us that McEnri had been in Fianna in Dublin; but his real name, as far as I can remember, was McFinlay, and they were not sorry he left Dublin. He left Waterford shortly afterwards and we heard no more of him. During his sojourn here he was employed as a waiter in the Imperial Hotel, Waterford.

In 1918 we had already moved out into the surrounding area and had units organised in Ferrybank, Dunkid (Co. Kilkenny), Ballyduff, Portlaw, Dunhill and Carrick-on-Suir, and a girls' unit attached to our own in Waterford. We brought the Countess down and she lectured in the City Hall on 1916. She was accompanied by Theo Fitzgerald: after a banquet at the Metropole Hotel here we went to Carrick-on-Suir and she lectured in the Town Hall there.

We found it necessary at this time to concentrate on training officers and N.C.Os to handle the different units, and complete reorganising had to take place; and at a conference of the District Council at which all officers were present it was agreed that the area complete should be designated as a Battalion area, and appointments would be based on past record and ability (by means of tests) to teach scouting, squad section and Company drill, Field work, First Aid, Communications, Intelligence reports, Dispatch carrying etc.

Two of our officers, M. Lawlor (Captain), J. Walsh (Lieutenant), emigrated to U.S.A. and I was promoted to Captain and attached to the Battalion staff as training officer. Two nights were set aside each week for officers' and N.C.Os' training classes. All officers and N.C.Os. had to attend: any of the older members could also volunteer for these classes. As a result of their tests the personnel of our 1st Battalion Council were T. McDonald, O/C; P.W. Hearne, Vice Commandant; W. New, Adjutant (Lieutenant); J. Tobin, Quartermaster (Lieutenant).

- A. Company: Captain James O'Connor,  
2nd i/c. Lieutenant W. McGrath.
- B. " A. Colclough, O/C., Lieutenant.  
2nd i/c. Lieutenant M. Prendergast.
- C. " W. Pender, O/C.

Battalion Council meetings were held weekly and were attended by the O/C. each Company. The Battalion Quartermaster had the extra detail of training the units in the outlying districts.

Throughout the year 1919 we transferred quite a good number of members to the Irish Volunteers (I.R.A.). It was understood that on reaching 18 or 19 years, a member would be automatically transferred and accepted, but all officers of the Fianna would have to apply to their own Battalion Council for transfer, and if the Council refused the transfer we would not be accepted. Between the years 1917 to 1921 I made application three times but was refused transfer on each occasion.

In April 1920, on instructions from my O/C, I reported to Liam Walsh who was then a senior officer, I.R.A. (later Brigade O/C). and under his leadership together with a squad of "C" Company we carried out a raid on the Income Tax Offices at Parnell Street, Waterford, about forty yards from Manor Street R.I.C. barracks. The raid was completely successful and all books and documents were burned in the Gaelic Field immediately afterwards. The next assignment was the receipt and delivery of despatches from G.H.Q. to this area. This was accomplished as follows :-

Communications were received at the Great Southern Railway, North Station, Waterford, and were enclosed in envelopes addressed to O/C., Waterford, and sent with the Stationmaster's official correspondence by rail. One of our members, T. Galvin, working there as a Junior Clerical officer, was detailed for the duty, and he collected all despatches and arranged for their immediate transfer to T. McDonald's hairdressing saloon, The Mall, Waterford. At this address there was a member of our unit on duty every day from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m., equipped with a bicycle and he immediately set out to

deliver the despatches. This team of cyclists consisted of four young lads named John Cullen, John Cunningham, James Rodgers, Joseph Moran (all under fourteen years of age). They were briefed every week and one reported for each full day's duty. They were well trained in the topography of the country and knew all the contacts and it must be credited to them that right through 1920/1921, not one despatch entrusted to them was either "delayed" or "non-delivered". I would also add here that during all the period only one despatch failed to come from the Stationmaster's office directed to Parnell Street, Waterford. This happened through the absence of T. Galvin from the Stationmaster's office one morning when the stationmaster's correspondence arrived. The Stationmaster could make nothing of it and calling a railway porter (being a good Loyalist) he sent him up to the British Military Barracks with it. When T. Galvin came into the office a short time after he (the Stationmaster) told him about it, and what he had done. The information was immediately sent to me and we were able to contact the railway porter as he came out of the barracks. We found that the O/C. of the barracks was fairly ignorant of its contents (according to the porter), but paid him for bringing it to him and told him if he got any more to bring them along. We warned the Battalion Staff and Company Captains of the I.R.A. immediately of what had happened; but nevertheless the following day there were about ten arrests but no officer except two Lieutenants were taken. I have no record of any communications being received here from Fianna Headquarters from about the month of 1920 until the Truce. We were seemingly on our own. The last information I had to connect us with Headquarters was when our O/C., T. McDonald, informed our staff that there was a co-operation scheme in operation between I.R.A. and Fianna in Dublin. We were rather anxious for a better understanding with the I.R.A. here, but it did not seem to get very serious consideration in City circles. We were entrusted with the

duties already detailed in this report; and transfer of members was regularly carried out; and beyond this we did not seem to be making great progress towards co-ordination, as this example - I was instructed to report to O/C., "A" Company, 4th Battalion I.R.A. one day at 7 p.m. Having done so we were briefed as to the job on hands. "To raid the Island" (Purcell Fitzgerald's residence). We secured the necessary punts and rowed to the Island, completed the operation when we handed over the shotguns, ammunition etc. to the waiting car at the Ballinakie meeting point and dispersed. I was the only member of Fianna on that operation.

The result of that attitude prompted a long discussion at one of our staff conferences and our O/C. agreed that we should work and operate ourselves with a view to our own armament, but should an I.R.A. instruction be issued to clash with any plan prepared by ourselves, that instruction should get priority.

Our armament at this time consisted of one .45 revolver in my own possession. We made our plans and began raiding for arms etc. We started on the Loyalist houses such as Sir Ernest Goff's, the Justice of the Peace; Linesmen's Huts (Railway), Quarry storehouses etc. We arranged our own dump at the County Kilkenny side of the Suir and by the end of a month or two we had several revolvers, shotguns, one Lee Enfield rifle, one .22 rifle. We had arranged a small place again on the County Kilkenny side of the River where we were able to train our selected members and officers and N.C.Os. in target practice with the .22 and teach all about the rifle, but we were very limited with .303 ammunition (incidentally earlier on we could purchase two new long .45 Webley revolvers but as we could not raise the necessary cash - £7 - we arranged the deal with Seán Matthews who secured them).

In some instances we found that the I.R.A. units had preceded us in raids and vica versa. We eventually planned to raid two Business houses simultaneously at 10 a.m. one morning. One was an Optician's and the second a hardware store. Both raids were successful. Quite a lot of shotgun ammunition, fuse detonators etc. were got in one and about twenty sets of Field Glasses in the second. These raids had a sequel as follows :-

The morning after the raids I was instructed to report to Brigade Headquarters, I.R.A. (at that time Murphy's shop in Gladstone Street). I duly did so and I can remember some of those present. (Pax Whelan, P.J. Paul, R. Phelan - Brigade I.O.). I was asked about the raids and I told them we had carried them out. I was then handed a list of the goods seized and found it did not correspond with mine insofar as their list contained much more than I had had listed by our Quartermaster, Joe Tobin, as being taken in the raids. After some days we had found that four of those who had been on the raids, had set aside some of the fuse, detonators, one revolver and some trenching tools. All this material was discovered by our(O/C - T. McDonald, J. Tobin - Battalion Quartermaster and myself) staff on information we had received in our investigations.

The result of the enquiry into those raids led to the following action being taken -

1. The four members concerned to receive a serious reprimand from the Battalion O/C, but would not be dismissed from their units.
2. All officers to keep very close watch on the members concerned, to ensure that on any operation duly authorised, none of those members would be detailed to take part.
3. Transfer to I.R.A. would not be sanctioned by our O/C. for any of those members.

Thus these members were rendered ineffective and the I.R.A. in the City were safeguarded against the chances of them doing any harm

within their ranks. Those instructions were so effectively carried out that until after July 1921 there was no further action necessary.

On 29th November, 1920, a warship, Sir E. Wood, arrived in Waterford and we immediately detailed a unit to try and damage her. The plan was to have the younger lads penetrate to the engine-room and pour sand into all oil feeds, whilst some of us older members attracted the attention of the watch on deck. Unfortunately, the boat sailed again at 8 p.m. the same day.

In December 1920, at a staff conference, the O/C. issued instructions that all our arms, ammunition and any other war material we had was to be handed over to the 4th Battalion I.R.A. This was a very heated meeting lasting well into morning and it went very close to the disintegration of our Battalion. That this disintegration did not develop is a tribute to the discipline of our staff and Company officers and to the foresight of our Battalion O/C., who agreed to allow any of the officers who had their own arms to retain them. The instruction was duly carried out and the material and arms passed to J. Creed, Quartermaster, "C" Company, 4th Battalion, I.R.A.

This 1921 opened to us with a total armament of - four revolvers and very little ammunition. However, it was enough to allow us to get started again and in January, 1921, we seized and burned all English papers at the Waterford North Station.

When the ambush at Picardstown, Tramore, took place on 7th January, none of our officers was given an opportunity to be there and some dissatisfaction was becoming apparent in our ranks, and it was suggested at one of our conferences that we should organise our own Active Service Unit independent of the I.R.A. in the City. Towards this end about twenty of the oldest members and officers were selected

and an oath was administered to all by Commandant T. McDonald, and a special course of training set out. This seemed to ease the tension at this time. It may be of interest to note here that the day following the Tramore ambush (Picardstown), I was called to Dr. Philip Purcell's house. He told me he had a visit from the County Inspector, R.I.C. on the morning after the ambush inquiring if he had been out the night before and whom he had attended. The Doctor admitted being out but said he was not prepared to discuss his patients, that he had been called out to attend a patient and that was all. But when the County Inspector was leaving he just said "Doctor, change your driver the next time". It was Doctor Purcell who attended the wounded after the Tramore ambush.

I believe it was in March 1921 that at P.J. Paul's request I accompanied him on a survey of the Dunmore area and guarded the farm where he had a conference with the officers of the 6th Battalion I.R.A. Shortly afterwards the Police barracks was attacked but again none of our unit was detailed for it.

In February, 1921, having conducted training classes at our Headquarters in Thomas' Hill one night I left at 10 p.m.. On returning at 10.15, I found our Headquarters surrounded by British troops from outside the cordon of troops. I could only watch what was happening. Eventually the O/C. in charge, with some troops and an R.I.C. man named O'Reilly came out and our Commandant under guard was taken to the Military barracks immediately. A few of our officers who were inside during the raid were passed out through the cordon: they explained to me that a despatch had been found in our O/C's possession; he had tried to drop it in the fire but had been frustrated in doing so. We broke into the Headquarters (as the officer had taken the keys) but could not find anything of consequence there after the raid. With a few of our officers we immediately



went to McDonald's Business house, The Mall which was, as stated before, the depot from which all Intelligence and despatches were transmitted to their various contacts. We completely cleared it of everything of consequence and had only completed the job when the British troops arrived with the keys and searched the premises. On my return home afterwards I found my own house was cordoned off and a unit of troops and R.I.C. men searching it. Although they achieved nothing from this raid I was unable to live at home from that date onwards. Our Commandant, T. McDonald, was courtmartialled and received six months sentence which he served in Waterford gaol. From then onwards I was to take control.

To enable the local units of the I.R.A. to concentrate on their training our Companies were detailed to report to different areas in town in which Companies of I.R.A. were operating. The Company O/C. of the I.R.A. would arrange with our officer in his area where he would be conducting his training at the time, and our unit would supply the necessary scouts etc to cover approaches and guard during all periods of training. This proved very successful and training went on uninterrupted at all times. We established a line of communication of our own into the local gaol and had a constant flow of information in and out. The co-operation scheme was now working well, and when the Post Offices were raided quite a number of our selected members and officers were detailed. These raids were very successful and that our units took a very deep interest in the duties allocated to them is emphasised by the sequel to one of them. This one was the raid on the General Post Office on the Quay. One of our dispatch riders (Joseph Moran) was detailed to take away to a given point the proceeds of the raid and wait there for further instructions. Immediately the raid was over he went to the place as instructed. As he was waiting a long time,

(one hour to the appointed time of contact) and was in possession of quite a lot of cash taken in the raid, He passed his time away by checking the cash. We made the necessary verbal report to his own Company officer afterwards. At a later date when the Brigade Quartermaster, I.R.A. (M. Knox) was recording the summary of cash seized, our Battalion Quartermaster detected a discrepancy in the figure recorded in the G.P.O. raid and the figure reported to him by our member. As the result of a re-check and a further report from our despatch rider, some officers of "A" Company and the Battalion staff of the 4th Local Battalion, I.R.A. were placed under arrest and held for interrogation. The custody of these officers was handed over to Fianna and they were held prisoners in an unoccupied house in Ballymacaw area under the armed guard of James O'Connor, O/C., "A" Company Fianna, Lieutenant M. Cullen, 2nd i/c. Coy., Fianna, Joe Moran, despatch rider, Battalion staff, Joe Tobin, Battalion Quartermaster i/c. of Guard, until handed over to the Brigade Staff, I.R.A.

In May, 1921, a raid was organised on military supplies at Waterford North Station: both "A" and "D" Companies, 4th Battalion, operated this one, supported by the respective units of Fianna which had been detailed to work with them. This raid was successful. The foodstuff which was not destroyed was distributed to poor people by our members later on.

On instructions received from the local O/C., 4th Battalion, I.R.A., a raid was organised for the purpose of securing bicycles for despatch riders and as a means of transport for units in outlying districts. This was planned at one of our conferences and the officers and members detailed for it. It was carried out by Fianna in May 1921 and was completely successful as every

bicycle in the two biggest local depots was seized and taken away without the loss of one machine. Nothing of any serious consequence developed within the next month or two until the end of hostilities. Of those who were killed (ten) in this area during hostilities - Tom O'Brien, Thomas Walsh, Michael Moloney, John O'Rourke were all trained in the Fianna and transferred to the I.R.A.; but as most of these were killed during the Civil War it is a different phase of our history.

I joined Fianna Éireann when it was founded in Waterford, graduated from the ranks through N.C.O. grades to Captain, "A" Company, later to Training Officer and Battalion Vice-Commandant. Commanded the Battalion from February, 1921 until the end of the Truce. Where possible this statement has been verified by Joseph Tobin, late Quartermaster, Waterford City Battalion, Fianna (last surviving member of the old Staff), James O'Connor, late Captain "A" Company.

SIGNED: Patrick W. Hearsh

DATE: 18 August 1958

WITNESS: Sean Brennan Lieut-Col.

