

**ORIGINAL**

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21  
No. W.S. 1760

ROINN



COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1760.

Witness

Francis X. Coghlan,  
St. Roch,  
Whitechurch,  
Rathfarnham,  
DUBLIN.

Identity.

Captain, Rathfarnham Coy., I.R.A., 1920-1921.

Subject.

Easter Week, Dublin, 1916.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil.

File No S. 897.

Form B.S.M. 2

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21  
No. W.S. 1760

STATEMENT BY FRANCIS X. COGHLAN,  
St. Roch, Whitechurch, Rathfarnham, Dublin.

I joined the Volunteers at the inauguration meeting in the Rotunda in 1913. That night, people from different areas were told to parade at certain places, and we paraded at Parnell Square, the following week. I was assigned to C. Company of the 1st Battalion. My Company Commander was a man called Judge.

At the time of the Redmondite split, I remained with the Irish Volunteers. C. Company got so large that it had to be split up, and E. Company was formed. I was in E. Company, which was composed, to a large extent, of Civil Servants.

I took part in the Rising with F. Company of the 1st Battalion, in the Church Street area. We did not occupy any building. We were in the street, at the Father Mathew Hall, switching between the corner of North King Street and Church Street.

I did not know beforehand that the Rising was to take place, although I knew that things were getting warm, and that there was something going to happen, because we were told to bring out everything, from a needle to an anchor, on Easter Sunday. We all believed that things were more serious than usual, but I did not know that there was going to be a rising.

We did not actually parade on Easter Sunday. A man, called Williams, mobilised me, and, as he had a scattered district to cover, I mobilised another man for him. I told the other man to stand-to and await

further orders.

We were told to parade at Columcille Hall, Blackhall Place, on Monday morning, at twelve o'clock. We paraded there at twelve o'clock, and marched to our position in Church Street. Daly was in charge in the Columcille Hall before we moved out, and Fionan Lynch was in charge in Church Street. F. Company was scattered along, from the church in Church Street to North King Street corner.

A very short time after taking up our position and before we had time to put up barricades, two Lancers appeared on the scene, firing as they came along. My party returned the fire, and one of the Lancers was brought down at North King Street corner. That Lancer had shot a child as he was coming along Church Street. We were busy building barricades throughout Monday evening. We were not interfered with, during Monday night. Tuesday passed quietly; there was nothing out of the ordinary.

On Wednesday, a party of Volunteers took Linenhall Barracks, by burning it. Twenty-four prisoners were taken there, and marched to the Father Mathew Hall. I happened to know one of the prisoners, a man named Synnott, who worked in the Land Commission with me. I was placed in charge of the prisoners, and remained in charge of them until Micheál Lynch took over from me. While I was in charge, Liam Archer, present Chief of Staff of the Army, was brought in as a casualty, having been wounded.

On handing over charge of the prisoners, I proceeded to Mary's Lane, to replace Liam Archer at the

post there. He had no rank at the time. When I got there, I was busily engaged, with other Volunteers, in erecting a barricade, facing the markets and Capel Street. We took special care in erecting this barricade. We had plenty of material available, and we arranged loopholes, through which we got a good field of fire. The rest of the day passed quietly, except for continuous sniping in the North King Street area. There was no determined attack.

Friday was rather exciting, in that we were visited by our commanding officers. Piaras Beaslaf and Fionán Lynch came along. We were given to understand that we were to advance towards Capel Street, that the G.P.O. men would try to cut out to meet us, and that we would open up a line of retreat for them. Our advance, however, was not carried through, as the British advanced into Capel Street in force, and that changed our plans as far as I could see. I remained at the barricade on Friday.

Early on Saturday morning, the greater part of our party were moved as supports towards the North King Street area, but they were ordered to retire from there and go back to their original positions.

An incident I recall here is Piaras Beaslaf coming to visit me at the barricade. As he came down the street, near Mary's Lane, he was under continuous fire from the British who were then occupying North King Street. Despite this, he came up to where I was standing at the barricade, spoke a few words to me, and returned again by the same route, notwithstanding the fact that he was still under fire.

I was withdrawn from that barricade on Saturday morning, about nine o'clock, and sent to Church Street. I went up to the top of an old church, to try to get a position to fire back at North King Street. I forget the name of the church, and I forget whether I was ordered up to the top of it, or not. The British opened fire on this building. I had a good field of fire, but I could see nothing to fire at, although I could be hit by the British military from Kingsbridge station. I fired a few shots in the direction of the enemy. My carbine failed, and I descended from my position, to have the rifle adjusted. At this point, Joe McGuinness met me, and asked me who had evacuated the barricade at Mary's Lane. I told him I had, and he said to me, "Pick six men, and re-take the barricade immediately!" I picked my men and occupied the barricade, within a short time. The barricade was enfiladed from North King Street. We then threw up a further barricade at Greek Street, with scrap iron from an old yard nearby. This barricade faced North King Street. We were instructed that the barricade was to be held to the end, and we held it until the surrender.

An incident, which I would like to record, happened at this barricade. A member of my party, a young lad of about nineteen or twenty years of age, possessed a Lee Enfield rifle. He said to me, when the barricade was only a foot high, "I think I can locate the sniper who is interfering with us, in the building of the barricade". I said to him, "The barricade isn't high enough". However, he insisted that, after a little improvement, it would be well worth trying to get the sniper, and he got out behind the barricade, and, although he was still being sniped

at continuously, he took aim and succeeded in silencing the sniper. We suffered no further interference after that.

On Saturday evening, we were withdrawn to the Four Courts, and addressed by Ned Daly, who told us that we were about to surrender. There was a priest there, too. Some of the men started breaking up their guns, others just threw them away, and the "beaten team" feeling came over us. We were marched down the Quays, Capel Street, Britain Street and to the front of the Rotunda, where we spent the night.

We were marched up to Richmond barracks on Sunday morning, and, on Sunday night, we were marched out of Richmond barracks, down to the boat, and were taken to Stafford Jail.

I was released in about six or eight weeks. I did not go to Frongoch, because Darrel Figgis got the measles in Stafford, and the Stafford crowd were kept behind. In the meantime, I was released.

