

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21
NO. W.S. 185

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 185.

Witness

Margaret Kennedy, 117 Donore Terrace, S. C. Road,
Dolphin's Barn, Dublin.

Identity

Member of Cumann na mBan 1916 - Captain 1920.

Subject

- (a) Cumann na mBan Dublin, general.
- (b) Easter Week 1916. General.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil.

File No. S. 119.

Form B.S.M. 2.

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Statement by

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NO. W.S. 185

Miss Margaret Kennedy, 117 Donore Terrace, S.C.R.,

Dolphin's Barn, Dublin.

It was Annie Keating - now Mrs. Gerry Boland - that first introduced me to Cumann na mBan. She invited me down to 32 Lower Camden Street where the Fianna had a hall, which Cumann na mBan rented from them on Tuesday nights. We had the old Inghinidhe na hÉireann room for meetings in No. 6 Harcourt Street on Thursdays. This was in August, 1915, just after O'Donovan Rossa's funeral. In Camden Street we were trained and exercised in drill, figure marching, stretcher-drill, signalling and rifle practice with a little rook rifle. We also went on route marches regularly on our own initiative in order to train the girls in marching and in taking control. We had two instructors from the Fianna for drill, signalling and rifle practice - Seamus Pouch and a man named Devereaux (I don't know his christian name). Uniform material was available on purchase, some of us got them made and wore them. We also bought haversacks and First Aid outfits. Our branch was called the Inghinidhe ha hÉireann branch of the Cumann na mBan. In Harcourt Street we learned First Aid, Morse Code, Signalling, Dispatch Memorising, &c.

Seamus Pouch insisted that we should be put on a

military basis instead of being governed solely by a committee, and that officers should, therefore, be elected. Ours was the first Dublin branch to have officers. The two officers elected were: Eily Walsh (now Mrs. Martin Murphy) as Commandant, and Miss Rose McNamara as Vice-Commandant. The Secretary was Miss Josephine Walsh and the Treasurer Miss Marcella Cosgrave. The Committee continued to function as before, even after the officers were elected.

As we were the only branch on the south side we were attached to two battalions - the 3rd and 4th. On the big March Past on St. Patrick's Day, 1916, we were under orders to be ready as this might be the "real thing", meaning, of course, the Rising. We all wore full equipment and carried rations for twelve hours.

We continued our regular and intensive training up to Easter Week on the basis already outlined, on each Tuesday and Thursday night. Occasionally on Sundays we would go out to the Dublin Mountains with stretchers, etc. for training.

On the week preceding Easter Week girls were supplied from all the branches to Volunteer Headquarters at No. 2 Dawson Street for the purpose of making first field dressings for the men.

On the Thursday of Holy Week we were told that big manoeuvres were being held on the following Sunday, but that is all that was

said about it. I was not mobilised due to a "slip-up" on somebody's part, and it was by accident that I got to know about it as Mass in John's Lane Church on Sunday morning. There I met our Commandant, Eily Murphy. She told me to report to No. 6 Harcourt Street, and on the way there to call to her home in Warrenpoint Place to collect First Aid equipment to leave in Camden Row, Headquarters of the 3rd Battalion. Here all was confusion and upset due to Eoin MacNeill's order, but we learned that they were "standing to" awaiting developments. We were told to go home and await further orders, but to keep ourselves in readiness. These orders were given us at Harcourt Street.

On Easter Monday morning I had a mobilisation order. I was in the 4th Battalion group, and we were mobilised for Cleaver Hall Donore Avenue, at 10 o'clock a.m. Six or eight of us were sent to O'Hanlon's, 7 Gamac Place, Dolphin's Barn, to collect stretchers, lanterns and other goods stored there. Two girls of this family were with us. When we returned to Cleaver Hall we were ordered to proceed to Emerald Square to link up with the 4th Battalion. We moved off at the reere of "A" Company in the Battalion; all the girls on parade went together to Marrowbone Lane Distillery with "A" Company, and we all remained there until the following Sunday evening. No one was seriously or fatally wounded, D.G., but none got much sleep or rest, as attack on a big scale was always expected and prepared for. We were an outpost

of the South Dublin Union. There was intermittent sniping at us from the Canal Bank and from Guinness's Brewery, but the sniping from the canal side was not so persistent as that from the Brewery. Six of us were detailed for duty on a loft near a gangway that was held by the Volunteers, to prevent any possible surprise attack that might be launched by the military on the front gate of the Distillery.

On Sunday, about 3 or 4 o'clock p.m., Father Augustine from Church Street and a British Officer came along to the Distillery. As far as I know it was the Priest mentioned who first contacted Con Colbert concerning the surrender. My impression is that the Priest and the Officer went away and came back later on with Ceannt, who was not wearing either sam-brown belt or sword. The whole garrison then surrendered. Miss McNamara ordered that we were to surrender with the men, and we all did with one exception. We marched behind the men from the Distillery to Ross Road. On our way through the Coombe I picked up a rook rifle and carried it the rest of the way but I had to surrender it on orders from the British Officer. The men had to turn everything out of their pockets as well as laying down their arms.

We marched under escort behind the Volunteers to Richmond Barracks. When we arrived there we were put into two rooms in

the Married Quarters and locked up there for the night.

The following morning, 1st May, we were marched to Kilmainham Jail and kept there until 8th May. I have no complaints concerning my treatment while in jail.

My immediate activities on release were, distribution of National Aid Funds, investigation of cases, meeting prisoners, etc. Out of these activities the branch was reformed in the following August to continue our training for the period ahead of us.

Signed

Margaret (Loe) Kennedy

Date

29th January, 1949.

Witness

Patt. J. Hanratty Captain.

