

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
BURO STAIRÉ MILÉATA 1913-21  
NO. W.S. 357

ROINN  COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 357.....

**Witness**

Dr. Kathleen Lynn,  
9 Belgrave Road,  
Rathmines, Dublin.

**Identity**

Lecturer in First Aid to the Citizen Army  
and Cumann na mBan 1916.

**Subject**

- (a) City Hall, Dublin, Easter Week 1916;
- (b) General national activities 1916-1919.

**Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness**

Nil

File No. S.166. .... ..

Form B S M 2

**ORIGINAL**

STATEMENT OF DR. KATHLEEN LYNN,

9 BELGRAVE ROAD, RATHMINES, DUBLIN

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

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I was born in Mallaghfarry in Mayo, two miles from Killala, where my father was a clergyman. When I was nine my family moved to Ballymahon in Co. Longford.

The only tradition I ever heard about the 1798 Rising was when some people we visited at Ballymahon showed us some Waterford glass cups that had been saved from the Rising. The people had evidently fled from their home taking some precious possessions with them.

I did my medical studies at the Royal University and the College of Surgeons. I got my degrees from the Royal. After about 10 years in private practice and in hospitals I took a fellowship at the College of Surgeons.

It was quite in a casual way I first got in touch with the national movement. Helena Molony was ill and Mme. Markievicz came and asked me to go & see her. I did not know Mme. Markievicz although she was a distant cousin of mine through the Wynns, my mother's people. After Miss Molony got better she came and stayed with me in Belgrave Road where I have always lived since I left the hospital. We used to have long talks and she converted me to the National movement. She was a very clever and attractive girl with a tremendous power of making friends. That took place about 1912 or 1913.

I had become interested in the Women's Suffrage Movement before that through Mr. and Mrs. Haslam and quite sympathised with the militant side of it.

After the Citizen Army was founded in 1913 I attended Liberty Hall and gave lectures in First Aid and I also lectured to Cumann na mBan in 6 Harcourt St. after its establishment. It was there I met Miss French-Mullen who became my closest friend. She lived

with me for 30 years - until her death. She and I with the help of others - mostly republicans - founded St. Ultan's Hospital - Teach Ultain - for infants in, 1919. I never drilled, I had no time for that sort of thing. I knew and admired James Connolly. I was a great friend of Mme. Markievicz. She was a grand soul. She was brimming over with enthusiasm and was not like other people. Although you might gather from her manner that she was fantastic, she was full of sound sense and was quite practical. We all knew the Rising was coming off altho' we did not know the exact date. When it came to Holy Week we knew from the precautions that were being taken that it could not be far off. Larkin's two boys, who were at school in St. Enda's, were fetched from there and sent somewhere by train for safety.

Some time before the Rising - about a fortnight - Connolly asked me one Sunday to take him out somewhere in my car on the coast - it was along the Howth road but not as far as Howth. He wanted to do some reconnoitring. He was looking out to find some suitable place for the Germans to land or to have an encampment. On another occasion I drove about three men of the Citizen Army to a place in Sutton where there were British rifles - it was some sort of a sports ground, and they thought the rifles were there, but there were only dummy rifles that the G.R. Men were using for drill. These were the people that Marie Perolz, who was very witty, called 'God's rejected'.

One night in Holy Week I went out with the car to St. Enda's and there they loaded it up with ammunition and put some theatrical stuff on top of it, hoping to get through. Willie Pearse and I brought it in and landed it safely in Liberty Hall where there were many willing hands to unload it.

On another night - I think it was the Friday before Palm Sunday - Dr. McNabb brought down a carload of ammunition from Belfast and dumped it at the back of my house. That was stuff for the Volunteers who removed it all on the Saturday night.

The good people of the neighbourhood had little idea of what was going on in my house,

On Holy Thursday Connolly and the Citizen Army made me a present as a token of gratitude for the help I had given in connection with medical preparations for the Rising, providing first aid equipment, medical dressings and so on. It was a gold brooch in the form of a fibula and it is still my most treasured possession. The inscription is as follows:- "To Dr. Kathleen Lynn from <sup>Comrades,</sup> the men and women, ~~of the~~ I.C.A." <sup>Madam Markiewicz</sup> ~~Madam~~ wrote a poem for the occasion which I unfortunately lost <sup>K.H.K.</sup>

The Cumann na mBan for the same reason presented me with a pair of silver candlesticks and an ink bottle, similarly inscribed, which I also still have.

I think it was not until Saturday that I knew where I was assigned to for the Rising. No effort was made to conceal from the Citizen Army the real purpose of our preparations. However it was not our habit to discuss the why or wherefore of these preparations; we felt bound to keep all these matters a secret. Marie Perolz used to say Fr. Devlin of Whitefriar St must have known because there were so many people 'scraping their skillets' - she meant cleaning up their consciences by going to confession. I believe Whitefriar St. Church was a regular arsenal, as the Fitzgerald brothers were employed there repairing the Church.

On Holy Saturday Connolly told me to come early on Sunday to Liberty Hall to stand by awaiting orders as to what we would be given to do. We may have been giving last touches to dressings &c. and making up sandwiches for the men. We might have been there somewhere around 10 o'clock. We just hung around trying to busy ourselves. I know that Pearse was there and all the leaders were there, coming and going. Connolly was a bit worried and uncertain how things were going to turn out. He and the Citizen Army were determined to go out to fight

That night I was sent off by Connolly to spend the night at Mrs. Wyse-Power's as I was a person who was supposed to have a good night's rest in preparation for what the morrow might bring. I can't say that I slept very soundly as I kept thinking of what was coming off. We knew well a rising was coming.

When I came along on Monday morning we were given our orders - typed out - where we were to go. They were signed by Mallin. He was a commandant, I think. I was a captain, Miss French-Mullen was lieutenant. Jinny Shanahan, Bridget Davis and Rosie Hackett were there. My assignment was the City Hall. Mme. Markievicz and I were driven in my car from Liberty Hall by ~~Levin~~ <sup>K.F.N.</sup> who was a most reckless driver. Years after, in 1926, when Miss French-Mullen and I were in New York, a car suddenly stopped in the street; he flung himself out of it and rushed over to greet us.

The car dropped me and all my medical traps at the City Hall and I did not see it again for months. The idea was that Madame would use it going around to inspect the different posts; but when she got to Stephen's Green she stayed there with Mallin who was her superior officer. I think he was next to Connolly.

When I got to the City Hall, say sometime before 12, it was already occupied by Sean Connolly and his section of the Citizen Army. As I arrived there I saw the dead body of a big policeman lying on the ground - it seemed to be in front of the Castle gate. Just then Sir Thomas Myles came up, evidently going into the Castle and I still remember the look of horror in his face when he saw the body. I don't think he noticed me. He rushed off. I heard afterwards it was to get first aid equipment.

The gate of the City Hall was locked and I had to climb over it though I don't know how I did it. Finally somebody

came out  
 //and helped me in with my things. When I got in Sean Connolly said it would be better if some of us went up on the roof in case an attack might take place there. Jinny Shanahan and I went up. We left the bulk of the medical equipment downstairs taking only a little with us. I cannot remember the names of the men and women who were at the City Hall. Sean Hanretty, who has a wonderful memory, would be able to tell you, altho' he was not there himself, being in hospital at the time with an injured leg. He married Emily Norgrove who was at the City Hall with her sister, Annie. I remember Helena Molony and Sean Connolly's sister and his brother, Mattie. Helena came up on the roof for some time. There were 5 or 6 men there too. It was a beautiful day, the sun was hot and we were not long there when we noticed Sean Connolly coming towards us, walking upright, although we had been advised to crouch and take cover as much as possible. We suddenly saw him fall mortally wounded by a sniper's bullet from the Castle. First aid was useless. He died almost immediately; that, I think, was in the early afternoon. Jinny Shanahan whispered an Act of Contrition in his ear. We had another casualty on the roof. A young boy, whose name I don't remember, got a wound in the shoulder which I dressed immediately. His condition was not very serious, but he was nervous. He was brought downstairs and remained there until the evacuation. When he heard the others talk of trying to get out, he was afraid they would leave him behind alone. We reassured him on that point.

I cannot remember who took over command after Sean Connolly's death, but I think it was a tall fellow called Reilly.

A regiment of British soldiers arrived at the Castle, I think in the late afternoon. I did not see them, but I imagine the men on our roof and those on the roof of the Evening Mail and the tailor's shop opposite must have. I often thought afterwards that it was surprising that those soldiers were

allowed to enter the Castle yard unmolested by our men. I think that Sean Connolly's death had a demoralising effect on the City Hall men. It was a pity some attack was not made on them because immediately after their arrival the fusillade started. The bullets fell like rain. We had come down from the roof and were collected in the hall. The firing came from all sides and continued till after darkness fell. There was no way of escape although we discussed all possibilities. There was no electric light but there was a moon and we could see things where a beam of moonlight fell.

After a long time an entry was made by the British soldiers, I think through a window in the back. I was suddenly told by a voice in the dark to put up my hands, which I did. I was asked by an officer who was there. I said some women and a wounded man. I found out afterwards that men were there too, but I did not know it at the time. When I told him I was a doctor, he thought I had just come in to attend to the wounded. I informed him that I belonged to the Citizen Army which surprised him very much.

We were marched through the Castle Yard to Ship St. Barracks and put into a large room which seemed to be underground, because we could see the people passing above through a grating.

Signed: *Kathleen F. Flynn*

Date: *4<sup>th</sup> Mar. 1950*

Witness: *S. J. Cosán*

SECOND STATEMENT OF DR. K. LYNN,  
9, Belgrave Road, Rathmines, Dublin.

We were the best part of a week in Ship Street. The first day, we had quite a good dinner. After that, the food got slacker and slacker until, in the end, we were getting ship's biscuits and water. That was our diet for several days. I think we were about eight days there. The old military sergeant advised us that, if we moistened a cloth with water and rolled the biscuits in it, it would be easier to eat them, and we did that. He was really a kind old boy. When the military were able to go around a bit, some of them broke into one of the houses nearby; and the sergeant came in one evening with his pockets full of oranges which he gave us. We thought we had never tasted anything so delicious as these oranges.

The first day the doctor came in, and he was very nice and polite indeed. He said he supposed it was my custom to inspect the Citizen Army every day, and he brought me out to see all the men that were there. They were all herded together in a very small room. They were all Citizen Army men. I saw them there and sort of looked at them and encouraged them as much as I could. I saw little Halpin. He was so small that he had tried to escape by hiding up a chimney in the City Hall; and down he came and was found afterwards. He certainly was black with soot. He had a very hard time up the chimney,



but he got alright afterwards. After that, I was not let out any more, as they were much stricter.

The lavatory accommodation was appalling. If we wanted to go to the lavatory, we had to go escorted by a soldier who waited outside. I complained to the officer in command. I said: "It is perfectly appalling to have to use a place like that". He said: "It is good enough for you".

We slept on what they called biscuits. They were not biscuits. They were like little mattresses in sections, about three of which would be long enough to lie on. We had dusty grey blankets which were all crawling with lice. I never slept during the time I was there. I could not. The scratching was not so bad in the daytime but in the night-time it was perfectly awful. I always was very sensitive to that sort of thing. I used to marvel how the others girls seemed to sleep. They did not seem to mind. I was the only one. Even Miss Molony could. Mary Perolz was not with us at that time because I remember quite well, when we were marching from Ship Street up to Richmond Barracks, she was on the road, and she escorted us along the road and gave us great cheer and comfort. Certainly, when we were going along, the people were enthusiastic and all said we were great girls.

At Richmond Barracks we met the other girls who had been in Stephen's Green, etc. Miss French Mullen was

among them. Then we were brought to Kilmainham.

Miss French Mullen, Miss Molony and I had a cell to ourselves in the old part of Kilmainham. We were more comfortable than in the other place. I was able by degrees to get rid of my intruders. I had to pick them out one by one. I suppose the lavatory accommodation was better there. I must have been able to undress because I remember picking my undergarments. So, by degrees, I got rid of the vermin. At Kilmainham I remember we were given one basin of water for the three of us to wash in. It was more than we had in the other place. I, being the doctor, used it first, Miss French Mullen second and Miss Molony was last. We all had some sort of a wash, so that was something. We had wardresses there and conditions were decidedly better. It was a very trying time for us because Madame Markievicz was overhead in the condemned cell and we used hear reports that she was to be executed. We also heard about the other people that were being executed. We could hear the shootings in the mornings, and we would be told afterwards who it was. It was a very harrowing experience. We were there for about a week. I think we arrived there on a Saturday, as I know we were there for one Sunday. On Sunday it was much worse for us than on the other days because we were shut up for the night much earlier. Our last visit from the wardresses was earlier as they had to get off. I think we had no food from our mid-day meal on Sunday until next morning.

We were then removed in "Black Marias" to Mountjoy where we had cells to ourselves. We were hailed rather with joy by the wardresses because we were interesting prisoners. We were not like ordinary criminals. I got quite fond of the wardress who looked after me. She was quite kindly. We discovered that, when the suffragettes were there, they had made little holes in the plaster under the pipes so that, if one lay down on the floor, one could talk to the person in the next cell. Countess Plunkett was in the next cell to mine. Of course, she was in a terrible state about her son having been executed, and she used get awfully lonely and upset at night. We would lie down on the floor and talk; and that would make her better. After a while, we were allowed visitors and parcels, and then we were inundated with all sorts of presents of luxuries. The only thing we longed for was clean bread and butter. We had all sorts of cakes and fruits, etc., but we wanted something plain. We were allowed, after a little while, to have association. We would be walking in the grounds and talking to each other. In the afternoons we went to a room where laundry work was done. We foregathered there. We had not too bad a time while in Mountjoy. We were six weeks altogether there. I was supposed to be very light and underweight. That is no wonder, considering that when we had only a couple of ship's biscuits, Miss Molony and I used give our share to the younger girls who were very hungry. I was under eight stone and I was given milk because I was supposed to be delicate.

Although I was very light, I was really quite hardy. I was not upset by what I went through.

I think we were a very short time in Mountjoy when some American press representatives came to interview us. We were brought into a room and were asked all sorts of questions. I remember there was a lady among them who asked us were we "diehards". At that time I did not know what diehards meant. She said afterwards that she never came across such a stupid set as we were. I think our brains were comatose after what we had been through and they refused to work for us. We were not at all up to the mark and as snappy as they would have liked us to be. They got the impression that we were a poor lot.

Then I was deported to England. My family made tremendous representations; and they got some friend of a friend of theirs who promised that she would take me under her charge. I was supposed to be a sort of a lunatic and I would be under her charge, but I refused to go. I went to a place called Coltford, near Bath. There was a Dr. Cusack doing locum tenens in Coltford. Mrs. Wyse-Power knew about him and she arranged it for me. I had a terrible journey and my poor brain was not at its best at the time. I remember at long, long last arriving in Coltford. Dr. Cusack was seeing his evening patients, and when I heard his Irish voice I thought it was the most heavenly thing I had ever heard. He did not know I was coming. Communications had fallen through. He was doing locum tenens for a doctor who had gone to the war, and he was living in the house with

the doctor's two daughters. Dr. Cusack was newly married and he and Mrs. Cusack were there with the two girls. Dr. Cusack had to make some excuse for my presence there. They took me on as a friend of Dr. Cusack who had just arrived. I was not supposed to be engaged in the Rising at all. I was just a friend.

The next day I went to London to see Miss French Mullen. I knew she was in London. She had got out before me. It appeared that the police had been notified that I was staying in Coltford and a policeman arrived, while I was away, to see me. Dr. Cusack told me afterwards that he never had such a job in his life trying to edge the policeman out before he would ask to see me. He succeeded in that. I was not supposed to leave Coltford. No police were stationed in Coltford but they were in a village near at hand. On the following day, I got the loan of a bicycle and rode over to the police station. All went well and I was alright.

Dr. Cusack was looking out for some other locum tenens and he had to go away. He left me in charge of the practice of that doctor in Coltford. I did that for only a few days because very soon after that I heard that my sister was ill with typhoid ~~and~~ fever. Mr. Ginnell, I think, got permission for me to go back home to Ireland to look after her. Then I had to ask the people to get somebody else to look after the practice in Coltford and that was settled up some way.

I was with my sister in Cong for some little time

until she was better. Then I went back again to England, and I was in Bath for a short time. Dr. Cusack had left Coltford and had gone somewhere else. I was on my own in Bath. The doctor in Coltford was rather annoyed, I think, at the idea of a lady doctor taking his place, although his patients did not suffer in any way. They got on alright. After a short stay in Bath, I got home again. I was home perhaps by the end of August.

There were tremendous representations made by all sorts of people - both loyalists and unionists did their best - because my patients wanted me back. I got back and I continued on at my practice in Dublin. Of course, all the unionist people and all my friends said that nobody would ever go near me on account of my appalling conduct. Some of them may have dropped off, but I don't remember that I suffered very badly in that way.

When I got back to Dublin, Miss French Mullen was back too. We wanted to do something for the girls who had been in the Rising and did not get back to their jobs, so we started a shirt factory in Liberty Hall and we made a certain amount of money. My recollection is that we started it after the Rising and that we got in the machines, etc. I don't think it was there before the Rising. Other activities may have been there, but I don't think the shirt factory was. Miss French Mullen was the prime mover in this. She worked it for all she was worth. The girls did not turn out to be a success. I think they wanted proper supervision.

At Christmas time we made great preparations for sending parcels to Frongoch. The Citizen Army were making all kinds of Christmas preparations. Then suddenly the prisoners were all released. I think the provisions had not actually been sent, so that they had all the feasting in Liberty Hall.

I was connected with Sinn Féin all along from the time of the Rising and was on the Standing Committee. I was probably at the Sinn Féin Convention in the Spring of 1917, but I have no particular recollection of it. Whenever Sinn Féin started again, I was in it.

I was at the big demonstration in commemoration of the Rising. It was held in 1917. We marched from Liberty Hall to O'Connell Street. I remember quite well seeing the boy getting up on the roof of the G.P.O. and hanging the Tricolour from the corner. I don't know who he was. Miss French Mullen and Helena Molony were determined to hang out a flag at the College of Surgeons. They failed to get in there, so they induced the caretaker of a house on the corner of York Street, just opposite the College of Surgeons, to open the door of the "Wild Geese" Club for them and they hung out their flag. The "Wild Geese" were sympathisers with the national movement generally, but they did not want their club broken up and were very angry when they found the flag. The Misses Griffin belonged to this Club.

I took part in everything national that was taking place during 1917 but I don't remember anything else of

great interest during that year.

At a meeting of the Standing Committee that took place in the middle of May, 1918, it was known that arrests were about to take place. I did not know how the information came, but I think some of the other members probably did. It was felt during the meeting that it was important that we should get away unostentatiously. Joe Clarke slipped me out the back way and I got into Aungier Street, through a lane called Protestant Row. I got home safely. Dr. Tom Dillon's mother was ill at the time and, when I got back from the meeting, I went in to see her at 13, Belgrave Road where she lived. Dr. Dillon meantime had arrived home from the Standing Committee. As I walked out of No. 13, the G-men walked up the path. They arrested Dr. Dillon. I just went into my home in Belgrave Road for a moment and then went up to Mrs. French Mullen's house in 63, Moyne Road. It was thus I escaped arrest.

I was on the run then until the outbreak of the influenza epidemic at the end of October or November, 1918. I was not able to carry on my practice except with a few patients. I did not go to my own house. I occasionally saw some patients in their own homes. Miss Molony got up a beautiful rig-out for me. I was supposed to be a war widow, with the military badge of my husband's regiment on my coat. I had my hair powdered and dressed up very beautifully in a way that I ordinarily never wore it. I used go to meetings and went about a good deal.



I was always very careful to walk slowly and be a little lame. Of course, I was not like that at all. I attended any meetings that took place and took part in anything that I could.

At the 'flu epidemic, as doctors were so very badly wanted, I just decided that I would go home, and I did. I was arrested immediately and brought to Oriel House. I was told that I would be deported. Miss French Mullen, the Lord Mayor and everybody kicked up an awful "shine". Doctors were terribly wanted at that time. I was permitted to remain in practice if I did not leave the city of Dublin. I carried on. I would not want to leave the city of Dublin, so that it did not much matter.

At that time, I and some friends of mine, the Misses Griffin, Madelaine French Mullen and a few other Republican women, like Mrs. Tom Clarke, had formed a committee to start a hospital for infants under a year, as there was no such hospital in the city at that time. The lack of knowledge of the treatment of infants at that time was appalling and the attention given to them in the general hospitals was very defective, only surgical cases being treated. No interest was taken in malnutrition and kindred complaints. We considered it high time that this state of affairs should be remedied. We founded a hospital for infants under a year at 37, Charlemont Street.

We had managed to acquire the old, derelict house at 37, Charlemont Street. It had been unoccupied for

fourteen years. Before we had time to convert it into a children's hospital, the 'flu epidemic had broken out. The women of the Citizen Army, of one accord on a Sunday, came to that derelict house and cleaned it up. The pigeons had got into one of the top rooms which had been a dormitory and it was filthy dirty. The women cleaned it and made it presentable as far as possible. They were mostly Republicans that helped. Countess Markievicz helped and Countess Plunkett brought bedding. We got things from friends around. It was a very scratch affair. We admitted patients suffering from 'flu. At that time I had got from Dr. Crofton some vaccine which we had used successfully in a couple of 'flu cases in the previous May. When the epidemic broke out, I got a supply of this vaccine from Dr. Crofton. In one night that we went to Liberty Hall, the whole of the Citizen Army there - over two hundred of them - were inoculated with this vaccine. Of this number of men, not one developed 'flu. Then we used this vaccine in the hospital in Charlemont Street. Not one patient that was admitted to the hospital died. We had some patients that were very bad, among them Mrs. Cathal Brugha who, at the time, was expecting a baby. We had Michael Staines there. His friends in the I.R.A. were constantly trying to visit him, but I refused permission.

When the epidemic was over, we closed the hospital for the time being. It was formally opened as St. Ultan's Infants' Hospital on Ascension Thursday, 1919. We had £70 in the bank, and there were two infants in the hospital.

A man who was on the committee with us remarked: "If you were men, I would say you were lunatics, but because you are women you might succeed". After that, of course, I went on with all the Sinn Féin activities and everything else like that. We ran the hospital as well.

I took part in the activities connected with the general election in November and December, 1918. I was present at the final rally, which was addressed by Father O'Flanagan and others, in O'Connell Street. Father O'Flanagan was marvellous that time.

I was present at the opening of the Dáil on the 21st January, 1919, and shared in the general enthusiasm.

I don't remember anything else of importance. So far as I can recollect, the Citizen Army took no part in the activities that took place in 1919, 1920 and 1921 in Dublin. My house was constantly being raided and watched, so that none of the wounded Volunteers, after any action that took place, would have been treated by me during the Black and Tan time. Therefore, I cannot recall anything further to chronicle.

SIGNED: *K. H. ... F. R. C. S. I.*  
DATE: *4th May 1950.*

WITNESS: *S. M. Curran*  
DATE: *4th. beabane 1950*

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