

The landing of rifles and ammunition from a yacht was planned many weeks ago, and about a month ago the details were decided. The yacht was to enter Howth Harbour & moor at 1 p.m. at the end of the east pier, just opposite the coastguard station which occupies the end of the west pier. Simultaneously with the mooring of the yacht the Dublin regiment of volunteers was to arrive at Howth Harbour by road, to line the entire east pier and to occupy the approach. This was timed for Sunday July 26th at high water, when the yacht's cargo could be most easily discharged on the pier. The arrangement on both sides was punctually observed. The volunteers were paraded on their ground at Fairview at 10 a.m. They began their march at 10.30, and reached Howth a little after 12.30. Similar marches had taken place on the preceding Sundays, and the object of this one was known only to a few members of the committee, and was not disclosed to either officers or men until the head of the column arrived at the yacht. At the same moment the rifles began to be landed. The men were halted, & at once the rifles were passed from man to man along the line. In the meantime a number of vehicles were run down the pier and were loaded with rifles & ammunition at the same time as the rifles were being distributed among the men.

The coastguards were taken too much by surprise to

act immediately, but after the discharging of the cargo had made considerable progress, they manned their boat and crossed towards the yacht. They were informed on their approach that they would not be allowed to interfere, and since they could not even hope to get alongside they returned to their station.

They tried to open telephone communication with Dublin, but failed. They then sent up two rockets in quick succession, apparently without effect. By that time the yacht's cargo was completely cleared, the operation, well handled by as many men as could find room to work, being over in about half an hour.

The volunteers then started for Dublin. I remained to say a few words of thanks & congratulation to the yachtsmen, (two of whom ~~were~~ were women!), & then had luncheon with some friends at the St. Lawrence Hotel. While we were at lunch, ~~at~~ a detachment of the Metropolitan Police arrived from Dublin, ^{by train} and marched at once to the east pier. The yacht was now well away, sailing under a fine breeze. But for a slight accident to her gear, she could have got away within 45 minutes of her coming alongside.

I got into a motor-car about 3 p.m. & overtook the volunteers at Raheny, where they had halted for food. Immediately on my arrival they started for Dublin, accompanied by a detachment of D.M. police who had come to Raheny. Other detachments of the Metropolitan Police passed us making their way to Howth on the electric tramcars. Some of these cheered the

Volunteers. I marched with the volunteers until they were about halfway between Raheny & Clontarf. Then, as I had to return to the north by the 6 p.m. train, & in the meantime to attend to some business in Dublin, I got into taxi and went ahead. From that point until I reached Nelson's Pillar, there was no sign of precautions or opposition, & the Mr. MacDermott of the Prov. Committee went back in the taxi to report the road clear. I should say that a considerable number of cycle scouts went ahead of the volunteer force.

I came to my own house, and Colonel Moore arrived there a few minutes later. He learned from me for the first time what had taken place. He came back with me as far as Amiens Street Terminus, where we parted. I going to the railway. Just as I left Col. Moore on the street, a young man came up to me & spoke about the volunteers. "The street was crowded, & I asked him had the volunteers gone by.. He said they had not, that they had turned aside & come in by other roads. This was all he told me, supposing no doubt that I knew as much as he. I then told him to follow Col. Moore & give him the ~~the~~ news. As he left me, another young man ran up to me on the steps of the railway station, and asked me "What about getting in the rest of the stuff?" This question led to others on my part, & I then first

learned that the Volunteers had been stopped at the 4
end of the Malahide road by soldiers & police,
a conflict had taken place, & that a few were
including Mr. Judge, but that the main body of the
Volunteers had got away with their rifles. My informant
said that his comrades had stowed their rifles in a certain
place. I told him to return there, to see that the rifles
were guarded, & not surrendered until they could be removed.

I should add that the other young man told me that he
wanted to get a taxi but could not find one anywhere. I
afterwards learned that, immediately on the stoppage of
the march, volunteers had been sent into the city to
bring every available taxi by other roads to remove the
rifles.

I was doubtful whether to go on by train or remain in
Dublin, but concluded that by that time I could not
get into effective touch with the arrangements so as to
give any help. I arrived at Omagh about 9 p.m.

Next morning I had a motor car ready to bring me
to Dublin if the news in the papers seemed to make my
return desirable. I was back in Dublin at 3 p.m.

I have to add some remarks. Every care had been
taken to prevent violent conflict in case the
authorities should decide to oppose our operations

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at any point. Not a single round of ammunition was served out. Most of the ammunition was sent off in vehicles by different roads. A small quantity, about 2000 rounds, was sent with the volunteers. When the conflict began, many of the men endeavoured to get this ammunition, but Mr. Hobson refused to allow them to touch it.

The resistance offered to the attack of the police & soldiers was the minimum necessary. The object was to keep the rifles & get them safely away. To this end, a cordon of volunteers was drawn across the road to resist the attack until the rest made their way through the fields etc. The men ~~of~~ who were thus placed to hold the road did their duty well against a greatly superior force of police & regulars armed with bayonets. They repelled the attack with clouted rifles until all those behind them got clear away.

With regard to the later disorder in the city, there is one important point to be observed. Had sufficient police been left on duty in the streets, had the police not been sent out of the city to Howth, Rabeny, etc. I have no doubt that they could have easily prevented the collision and loss of life & wounding that took place.

I see that reports we are blamed by some for getting b
in the arms in broad daylight. The answer to that
is that if we had attempted it by night the risk
of failure would have been far greater, the danger of
violence & loss of life would have been far greater, & that
we succeeded, suffering only a few wounds & the loss of
21 rifles. Our men behaved with splendid discipline
endurance & fidelity. Most of them were on foot from
about 9.30 a.m till they got home with their rifles about
6 p.m., & did not leave the ranks until the last moment.

The honour won by the Dublin regiment on July 26th
is second only to the honour that Ireland will gladly
accord to the brave men & women who, after weeks of
wild weather on the sea, landed their cargo to the
minute at the spot agreed upon. The story of their
work & trouble & suffering is not unknown to me,
but for obvious reasons this is not the time to tell
it. Their adventures are stranger than fiction.
All about them is still a secret.

The foregoing is in MacNills
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