

Local Security Force North Louth Minute Book, 1940 – 1944

Repository Code: IE LHA

Collection Reference Code: PP00297C

Title: Local Security Force North Louth Minute Book

Dates: 16 Nov 1940 – 23 Sep 1944

Level of Description: Fonds

Extent: 1 bound volume, 127pp and two loose inserts

Name of Creator(s): Local Security Force North Louth

Admin/Biographical History: The period of the Second World War 1939 – 1945, was known in Ireland as 'The Emergency'. In response to the crisis the government introduced a series of measures. With invasion by Germany a very real concern, priority was given to the expansion of numbers in the defence forces and the formation of local security forces. The Volunteer Reserve that was originally established in 1929 was renamed the Local Security Force (LSF) in June 1940. Its authority came from the Emergency Powers Order, 1939, which described the LSF as a 'Temporary Special Police Force'. It operated nationwide as a police auxiliary made up of volunteers reporting to An Garda Síochána. The LSF consisted of several service groups including Intelligence & Organisation, Communications, Transport, Engineers, Supply, First Aid and a Combat Group. However, within three months of its establishment, the majority of its 180,000 strong membership requested to serve with the Combat Group so that by January 1941 the LSF's larger than anticipated Combat Group came under the control of the Defence Forces or army, becoming known as the Local Defence Force (LDF). This ensured that proper training could be given to all its members. The LDF was organised into Rifle Battalions, commanded by Army Officers. In 1946, it was reorganised again under the title An Fórsa Cosanta Áitiúil or FCA (the Local Defence Forces).

In Dundalk the Local Security Force was founded in 1940. As the LSF was organised in groups based around Garda stations, there were two groups in Dundalk: one based at Anne Street; and a second based at Bridge Street. Dundalk LSF was involved in a variety of activities. The LSF did not have the power of arrest, however, recruits undertook patrols and watch duties and were trained in gun practice and first aid. They dealt with extraordinary events including a bombing of the Greenore railway in 1941 and a plane crash at Dromad in 1944. An air-raid shelter was built under Market House in Dundalk while a Control Centre was set up in the basement of the Town Hall, chosen because it had very strong overhead protection (being a 3 foot thick vault under the foyer).

The Dundalk force co-ordinated their activities with other LDF in the area: Carlingford, Blackrock and Omeath. This fostered camaraderie and a sense of common purpose. The LSF and LDF were also involved with social and cultural events in the area. Dinner dances raised funds for the Red Cross and other voluntary organisations. A significant number of the population became involved in the defence groups thus fostering a strong community spirit and during the early 1940s, 'Step Together Parades' were organised where the various auxiliary services (LSF, LDF, Order of Malta, Red Cross and the Maritime Inscription) paraded through Dundalk, led by the Emmet Brass Band and dances and a football match were held. Frank Aiken, Minister for the Coordination of Defensive Measures (1939-45) reviewed the North Louth Local Security Force at the Market Square in 1940 and again visited a Step Together Parade in Dundalk in 1943.

Of the two Dundalk units the 2nd Company ('B' Staff) met at Anne Street. Among its members were the brothers Oliver and Peter McCourt; Danny Goodfellow and Dermot Gaynor. A photograph in Louth County Archives (reference PP00272/003/002/005) shows some of the aforementioned being inspected in the Market Square by Frank Aiken, Minister for Defence in 1940/1941. Membership of the LSF committee during the years 1940-1944 included: John Maguire (chair), Michael Spillane, Frank Donnellan, John Cosgrove, Patrick Murphy, Peter Downes and Philip Smyth.

Archival History:

This item was donated to Louth County Library by The Old Dundalk Society who had previously acquired it by purchase. It was transferred to Louth County Archives Service in 2009.

Scope and Content:

Minute book recording details of attendance and proceedings of weekly meetings of the 'B' staff (Anne Street) North Louth District Command of the Local Security Force relating to the financing, recruitment, equipment and supplies, correspondence, discipline, test mobilisations, inspections and social activities of the group. References to other Local Security Force, Local Defence Force and Air Raid Precautions groups in the area, such as Omeath, Hackballscross, Shelagh, Dromad or Blackrock, are often included. Minutes are not always in chronological order and the minutes for 1940 – 1942 are stuck down on the right facing pages while the minutes for 1943 – 1944 are stuck down on the left facing pages. There is a mix of typed and handwritten minutes which are often recorded on headed paper. Many names of members can be found throughout the minute book. Minutes are generally dated and signed by the Chair, Superintendent John Maguire.

Includes:

- Finance: joint meeting of A and B Staff 'to discuss finance in the light of the transfer of 'A' Groups to military control' (11 Jan 1941).
- LSF at Eimear Restaurant (Dundalk): 'no reply was received from Mrs Maguire concerning irregularities alleged to have been committed by group members. Mr John Maguire and Mr Donnellan were deputed to interview her at their convenience' (03 May 1941).
- Fire at Aghameen mountain (03 May 1941).
- Oliver Plunkett Shrine at Drogheda: Fr Murray asked to bring to notice of LSF that Sunday 20th July was a day of pilgrimage (27 May 1941).
- Bombing incident at Dundalk: 'Adjutant was instructed to request group leaders Daly and O'Byrne to furnish in writing before 31st August a full report covering activities of their groups in connection with the bombing incident' (31 Jul 1941).
- Non-poaching agreement between LSF, LDF and ARP (01 Nov 1941).
- Test mobilisation at Blackrock: Mr Hannaway reported that 'the response was very creditable to the Group's organisation' (06 Jun 1942).
- Step Together Week: arrangements discussed (03 Sep 1942).
- The Parade (Step Together): '...the District Staff considered that the work assigned to them was carried out satisfactorily. Mr Maguire mentioned that he had received congratulations from many sources on the men's behaviour' (22 Oct 1942).
- Proposed second Group at Anne Street 'whose duty would be the patrolling of the Railway property during an Emergency...several difficulties stood in the way of the formation of such a group and it was decided not to proceed with the project...' (28 Nov 1942).
- 'Recent fire at Kiltimagh brought about a discussion on the equipment necessary for firefighting at villages in North Louth. Mr McGahon undertook to have enquiries made from the County Manager...' (20 May 1944).

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- Fallen aircraft at Dromad: 'The district officer reported on the fallen aircraft at Dromad and highly praised the work of the group. He recommended that the district adjutant be instructed to write the group leader conveying the district staff's appreciation of their conduct' (23 Sep 1944).

Subject index: Air Raid Precautions; Defence; Emergency, The, 1939 – 1945; LDF (Local Defence Force); LSF (Local Security Force); Military Organisations; Second World War; World War II

Appraisal & Destruction: Retain permanently

Accruals: No further accruals are currently expected.

System of Arrangement: No arrangement as only one item

Conditions of Access: Open Access, by appointment

**Conditions Governing
Reproduction:** Items may be subject to copyright. Contact Louth County Archives staff regarding copying; copying fees apply.

Language/Script of Material: English

Physical Characteristics: Bound volume with minutes on separate pages stuck into volume. Fair - good condition.

Technical Requirements: Careful handling required

Finding Aids: Descriptive list can be found on on-line catalogue available at <http://www.louthcoco.ie>

Existence & Location of Originals: Louth County Archives Service

Existence & Location of Copies: Some digitised documents may occasionally be found on <http://www.louthcoco.ie>

Related Material:

Louth County Archives Service: PP00272/003/002/005 Local Security/Defence Force photograph, 1941

Publications

- O'Sullivan, Harold, *A History of Local Government in the County of Louth, From Earliest times to the Present*, (IPA 2000, pp161-62)
- Whitmarsh, Victor, *Dundalk in the Emergency*, (VM 1980)

Repository Home Page: <http://www.louthcoco.ie>

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