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et métaphores**

The War That Never Came: Creating, Transmitting and Maintaining Handed-Down Memories of the Emergency in Ireland. Acknowledging Family Recollections of WWII

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The War That Never Came: Creating, Transmitting and Maintaining Handed- Down Memories of the Emergency in Ireland. Acknowledging Family Recollections of WWII¹

Abstract: Within the context of WWII, this essay explores the notion of national and personal conflict within individuals and communities in Ireland, part of which had undergone the severing of imperial connections and the attainment of national independence less than a full generation before. In Ireland, the conflict of war on a wider stage impinged upon an inner conflict closer to the heart. To go or not to go... to war. The question was raised to remain behind and serve a/ the cause by maintaining a “home guard” alertness. This essay attempts to examine the fuzziness of transmitted handed-down memory which is far from being as clear and precise as “official” history. War memorials suggest an alternative conclusion and an alternative sense of historical order – intellectual and ideological. At the core of this paper are the memories of Martin Jarlath Gormally, the author’s father. His grandchildren and great-grandchildren live in Ireland, France, the United Kingdom, and Austria. For comparison/ contrast, brief reference is made to WWII in France and to de-Nazification in Austria.

Keywords: conflict and neutrality in Ireland, World War II, Emergency 1939-1946, transmission of memory, border (the), “official” history, war memorials, France, Austria.

Résumé: Cet article propose d’explorer, dans le contexte de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale en Irlande, l’idée du conflit national et personnel chez des personnes et dans des communautés locales. Une partie du pays avait subi la rupture des liens impériaux et la réalisation de l’indépendance nationale moins d’une génération auparavant. En Irlande, la guerre à une échelle plus grande empiétait sur un autre conflit, plus près du cœur. Faire ou ne pas faire... la guerre. La question s’est posée de rester et de servir une/ la cause en maintenant la vigilance dans un home guard territorial. Cet article propose d’analyser le flou du souvenir transmis entre générations et qui est loin d’être aussi clair et précis que l’histoire « officielle ». Les monuments aux morts suggèrent une conclusion alternative ainsi qu’un sens alternatif de l’ordre de l’histoire – intellectuel et idéologique. Cet article est fondé sur les souvenirs de Martin Jarlath Gormally, le père de l’auteur. Ses petits-enfants et arrière-petits-enfants vivent en Irlande, en France, au Royaume-Uni et en Autriche. À des fins de comparaison et de contraste, il sera fait une brève référence à la Deuxième Guerre mondiale en France et à la dénazification en Autriche.

Mots clés: conflit et neutralité en Irlande, Deuxième Guerre mondiale, état d’urgence 1939-1946, transmission des souvenirs, frontière (la), histoire « officielle », monuments aux morts, France, Autriche.

1. The author expresses his gratitude to his father, Martin Jarlath Gormally, born in Brownesgrove, Tuam, Co. Galway, on 10 November 1922 whose memories and experiences are the core of this paper. The article is dedicated to Professor W. J. Smyth, President Emeritus, Maynooth University, for his unstinting enlightenment and unflinching encouragement.

The idea for this essay originated in the oral accounts of WWII by Martin Jarlath Gormally (born in County Galway on 10 November 1922, and in his 99th year at the time of writing), based on his recollections of the Emergency (1939-1946) as that period in then neutral Ireland is generally referred to. Constantly repeated stories about “the war” are among the strongest childhood memories which the author, his son (b. 1952), possesses, although they are not his own memories. The father’s stories influenced the son’s perception and his memories of life on the border between Ireland and Northern Ireland (1955-1970). In keeping with the Irish tradition of emigration, members of Martin and his wife Grace’s families left for Argentina, the United Kingdom, Italy, France and the United States. Members of the second generation emigrated to Tanzania, Kenya, South Africa, Malaysia and the United States. His son chose to go to France in 1971 and became a French citizen, his daughter chose the United Kingdom where her Irish-English family lives; he has several Irish grandchildren, one of whom is of Chinese extraction, his grandson made the choice to move to France and his granddaughter opted for Austria; his grandchildren and great-grandchildren live in four countries, his great-grandson was born in Austria, and his UK great-grandchildren have English and Scottish ancestry and an Iranian parent, respectively. Over a period of thirty years (1984-2014) he travelled regularly in France in the company of his son. WWI and WWII memories, on both sides of his French daughter-in-law’s family, highlighted his own memories of the Emergency. The comparisons made with Ireland illustrate how family and personal memory is created, and lead to an examination of how connections are established with public institutions such as history museums and war monuments, which the essay addresses in relation to selected examples from Ireland, France and Austria.

Methodology

The methodology adopted in this essay is based on the oral tales told by Martin Gormally over a period of seventy years. The stories originally centred on the centuries-old fractious relationship between Ireland and the United Kingdom as perceived by Martin who was born during the Irish Civil War (June 1922-May 1923), whose family witnessed Black and Tan brutality, and who experienced the Economic War² (1932-1938) during his own childhood. On the other hand, the author grew up during the 1950s in County Donegal, on the border between Ireland and the United Kingdom. Along that border, shared with counties Derry, Tyrone and Fermanagh, there was first-hand tangible evidence of ancient conflict. From 1973 on, membership and participation in what is now the European Union was contemporaneous with the beginning of profound social and economic changes in Ireland, and violence in Northern Ireland. That process in turn created a renewed sense of Irish identity,

2. Also known as the Anglo-Irish Trade War.

a turning towards the continent, a reappraisal of the relationship with the United Kingdom and the discovery that Ireland shared much with other European countries, including pro and anti-British feeling, linguistic and ethnic aspects of identity, and hero worship³. War monuments, although not always the direct focus of attention, are visible signs of remembrance, and in Ireland, North and South, there are fundamental differences between the number and nature of WWI and WWII monuments, and they also differ from war memorials in France and in Austria. Given that many eyewitnesses to WWII have disappeared, the time has come to transmit these second generation and handed-down⁴ but nonetheless personalised memories to the third generation, who will in turn make their own connections in a changing Europe and in a world marked by more recent wars than one cares to count. It is also important to examine the surviving monuments so that both the tangible and the intangible aspects of that memory are conveyed in as complete a manner as possible, in order that the forthcoming generations can face their future with a strong sense of where they have come from and with no stone left unturned.

During the author's childhood, the stories were collected at home during family exchanges about Ireland's relationship with the United Kingdom. Later, from 1970 onwards, when the author was a university student at Maynooth College, the discussions included Irish historical contacts with France and mainland Europe, including the Wild Geese, the continental Irish Colleges and WWII in France. Over a thirty-year period (1984-2014), father and son spent many weeks in Paris and on the roads of Normandy (D-Day landings), the Massif central, Nouvelle Aquitaine (Oradour-sur-Glane, Bordeaux), Burgundy and Grand Est (Verdun, Strasbourg), visiting battle sites, war museums and military artefacts from WWI and WWII. Following retirement from the Department of Agriculture in 1987, Martin was involved in a writers' group⁵ in County Sligo where he was a regular contributor of published and unpublished material inspired by personal memories from the 1930s and the Emergency. He published a novel⁶ in 2008, then 86 years of age, and continues to write regularly in English and Irish for personal satisfaction.

Irish neutrality 1939-1946

Ireland remained neutral in WWII and the period from 1939 to 1946 is generally referred to as "The Emergency"; Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom was at war. The Taoiseach Éamon de Valera had fought against the British in the

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3. The existence of a common language shared by Ireland and Austria with England and Germany respectively does not equate to a recognised common identity.
 4. See interview with Marianne Hirsch, on line: <https://cup.columbia.edu/author-interviews/hirsch-generation-postmemory>.
 5. Sligo Active Retirement Association.
 6. Martin Gormally, *A Son of Aran*, Dublin, Original Writing – Sligo Active Retirement Association, 2008.

1916 Easter Rising and in the War of Independence (1919-1921), and he backed the Anti-Treaty IRA during the Civil War (1922-1923) which opposed partition. On coming into power in 1932, he weakened the constitutional link between the Irish Free State and the British Crown, introduced a new Constitution in December 1937 and, as war threatened in 1938, he obtained the end of British use of the Treaty Ports⁷, while negotiating simultaneously an agreement to end the Anglo-Irish Trade War (1932-1938), which had caused severe social suffering and financial hardship in Ireland. One year later, in September 1939, with war imminent, he decided that Ireland would remain neutral. To retrieve the Treaty Ports and to tempt Ireland to join the Allies, Winston Churchill used the unity card in 1940⁸. However, doubting British *bona fide* and London's ability to convince Northern unionists over unification, de Valera turned down the offer, a refusal not revealed until 1970⁹ and which Churchill, anxious to avoid another Irish crisis, had not communicated at the time to His Majesty's government in Northern Ireland.

Irish neutrality suited Germany more than it did the United Kingdom but neither side ever seriously considered invasion. The Germans refrained because of local British air and sea superiority, because of the land border between Ireland and Northern Ireland, and because their efforts to collaborate with the pro-Nazi IRA¹⁰ were counteracted by de Valera's severe political repression and equally stringent censorship. The latter was central to maintaining the apparent impeccability of Irish neutrality, essentially a "moral neutrality" heavily influenced by the centuries-old colonisation of Ireland by the United Kingdom, and which in the absence of actual warfare turned censorship into a weapon of war by keeping the Irish public in ignorance of atrocities committed by all the belligerent sides¹¹. In addition, Germany was unimpressed¹² by the apparent unpreparedness and amateurism of the IRA.

Northern Ireland remained part of the United Kingdom, and the British were reluctant to invade the independent political entity on the partitioned island. Churchill's detestation for Irish neutrality meant that the British merchant navy, despite counting high numbers of Irish mariners in its ranks, was reluctant to carry goods necessary for Ireland's economy when, in his opinion¹³, Irish ports could

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7. On the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1921, the United Kingdom retained three deep water ports, at Berehaven and Cbh (Co. Cork) and in Lough Swilly (defended by Fort Dunree and Lenan Fort, Co. Donegal). In 1937 de Valera negotiated the return of the ports which were handed over in 1938.
 8. Tony Sharp, review of Joseph T. Carroll, *Ireland in the War Years, 1939-1945*, *International Affairs*, vol. 51, no. 4, October 1975, p. 577-578.
 9. "The Emergency (Ireland)", *Wikipedia*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Emergency_\(Ireland\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Emergency_(Ireland)).
 10. J. C. Beckett, review of Joseph T. Carroll, *Ireland in the War Years, 1939-1945*, *The English Historical Review*, vol. 91, no. 360, July 1976, p. 689.
 11. Donal Drisceoil, "Moral Neutrality". Censorship in Emergency Ireland", *History Ireland*, vol. 4, no. 2, Summer 1996, p. 46-50.
 12. "Irish Republican Army – Abwehr Collaboration", *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irish_Republican_Army%E2%80%93Abwehr_collaboration.
 13. Daire Brunicardi, "Ireland and the Second World War – The Price of Neutrality", *History Ireland*, vol. 23, no. 3, May-June 2015, p. 40-42.

have helped the United Kingdom and its allies navigate the dangerous zone of the North Atlantic. Irish neutrality was of immense symbolic importance but in practice it did not preclude close cooperation with the British and later the US forces. It was unthinkable at the time that Ireland could be anything other than neutral, but the Irish army was nonetheless authorised, under a shroud of complete secrecy, to collaborate with the British regarding the possibility of a German invasion, and the secret was maintained until the mid-1970s¹⁴. Internment was introduced for foreign military personnel and at the end of the conflict 256 German military airmen and seamen were detained¹⁵ in the Curragh Military Camp, where IRA members were also imprisoned. British internees, on the other hand, were discretely repatriated during 1943 and 1944. US personnel were repatriated¹⁶, generally via Northern Ireland, under a bilateral government agreement¹⁷. Nevertheless, the policy of neutrality and the reality of war did create hardship for the Irish population. There was a dearth of essential raw materials which were generally imported via the United Kingdom: tea, tobacco, fertilisers, wheat, coal, timber, animal feedstuffs and manufactured goods. The government introduced a compulsory tillage¹⁸ scheme to provide supplies of Irish-grown wheat but high residual humidity levels led to the production of inferior quality bread. The state also introduced obligatory turf harvesting to guarantee fuel for domestic heating and the maintenance of transport services¹⁹.

Military conflict did not take place in Ireland, but it was anticipated, and preventive military preparations were made in the unlikely event of an invasion. On 28 May 1940, an auxiliary police service was established, the Local Security Force (LSF). It was divided into two groups on 22 June 1940 which led to the establishment of the military Local Defence Force (LDF) on 1 January 1941. The ranks of the LDF rose to 106,000 members by 1943; the combined ranks of the LDF and the LSF totalled 150,000. The LSF did considerable regular police work and the LDF devoted much time to military training with rifle, live ammunition, bayonet, and grenade, as a combat organisation under the full military command of

14. Joseph T. Carroll, *Ireland in the War Years, 1939-1945* [1975], San Francisco, International Scholars Publications, 1998, revised edition.

15. Luke Diver, "German internees at the Curragh Camp", *History Ireland*, vol. 25, no. 2, March-April 2017, on line: <https://www.historyireland.com/volume-25/german-internees-curragh-camp>.

16. "Curragh Camp", *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Curragh_Camp.

17. T. Ryle Dwyer, *Guests of the State: The Story of the Allied and Axis Servicemen Interned in Ireland during World War II*, Dingle, Brandon, 1994.

18. Bryce Evans, "Coercion in the Irish Countryside: The Irish Smallholder, the State and Compulsory Tillage 1939-45", *Irish Economic and Social History*, vol. 38, 2011, p. 1-17.

19. Peter Rigney, *Trains, Coal and Turf: Transport in Emergency Ireland*, Dublin – Portland, Irish Academic Press, 2010. Turf lorries were fitted with gas producer equipment made from coal and charcoal; trains were powered by coal. Turf-burning trains existed from the mid-19th century and the fuel was associated for a time with other coal substitutes during the Emergency (Ciarán Bryan, *Rationing in Emergency Ireland, 1939-48*, PhD thesis in history, Maynooth University, 2014, on line: http://mural.maynoothuniversity.ie/9130/1/CBryan_66665772_PhD_Thesis.pdf).

the Irish army which numbered 41,000 full-time soldiers in 1941²⁰. It is estimated that 100,000 Irish citizens travelled to the United Kingdom between 1939 and 1945²¹ and it is further estimated that in total 60-70,000 volunteers from Ireland also joined the combined British armed forces of which 50,644 joined the British army; a fact that de Valera chose to ignore. In comparison, it is estimated that 49,302 army recruits joined from Northern Ireland²² where Sir Basil Brooke, the Unionist Prime Minister, rejected conscription because of its likely negative impact on internal peace and community stability.

Censorship ensured that the general population was not aware of the number of German military personnel interned during the war in Ireland but there were public sightings of US planes crash-landing in counties Galway, Clare, and Limerick. German bombs were dropped in Wicklow (1940), in several other eastern counties (1941) including Belfast (April-May 1941) and the North Strand, Dublin (January and May 1941). Irish families were made aware of the wartime situation in the United Kingdom by family members on return visits home, whereas communication with relatives in other parts of the world was severely restrained by censorship. Irish families listened on Hamburg radio to *Germany Calling*, the anti-British propaganda broadcasts by “Lord Haw-Haw” (William Joyce, a US born Briton)²³, and they took note following the death of Hitler when de Valera signed the register of condolence at the German delegation in Dublin, and similarly when the Dáil adjourned a week later following the death of Roosevelt.

The comparisons made by Martin, on discovering the memories of occupation, collaboration, exodus, penury, atrocities, resistance and deportation in WWII France, led to comparisons and connections with the centuries-old occupation and colonisation of Ireland by the United Kingdom. Subsequently, he discovered the “postmemories” of war and the Nazi Occupation in his French daughter-in-law’s family, and in the experience of his granddaughter’s Austrian in-laws during the *Anschluss*, which led to further comparisons and family connections between war and memory in France, Austria and Ireland.

20. *The Irish Defence Forces Handbook*, Dublin, Military Archives, 1983, p. 94-96; “Army Reserve (Ireland)”, *Wikipedia*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Army_Reserve_\(Ireland\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Army_Reserve_(Ireland)); “Irish Army – The Emergency”, *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irish_Army#The_Emergency.

21. Enda Delaney, “Irish Migration to Britain, 1939-1945”, *Irish Economic and Social History*, vol. 28, 2001, p. 47-71.

22. Steven O’Connor, “Irish Identity and Integration within the British Armed Forces, 1939-45”, *Irish Historical Studies*, vol. 39, no. 155, 2015, p. 418; Brian Girvin, *The Emergency: Neutral Ireland 1939-45*, London, Macmillan, 2006, p. 274-275; Yvonne McEwen, “Deaths in Irish Regiments 1939-1945 and the Extent of Irish Volunteering for the British Army”, *The Irish Sword*, vol. 24, 2004-2005, p. 81-98.

23. The Deutsche Rundfunk also broadcast propaganda in Irish, *Irland-Redaktion*, from 1939-1945, at the same time every week immediately after Lord Haw-Haw’s broadcast. Professor Ludwig Mühlhausen signed off: “*Go mbeannaí Dia dhaoibh, a chairde, agus go saora Dia Éire*” (“May God bless you my friends, and may God free Ireland”); his successor Professor Hans Hartmann exhorted listeners: “*Coinnigí bhur neodracht!*” (“Keep your neutrality!”). See David O’Donoghue, *Hitler’s Irish Voices. The Story of German Radio’s Wartime Irish Service*, Bantry, Somerville Press, 2014, reviewed by John Swift, *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, vol. 104, no. 414, Summer 2015, p. 207-216; “Mühlhausen, Ludwig (1888-1956)”, <https://www.ainm.ie/Bio.aspx?ID=1132>.

A rural Galway family's memories of war

Memories are created by the experiences and perceptions of eyewitnesses²⁴ and are transformed and recreated as time evolves and contexts alter. Individuals, families, and social groups relive and integrate that which was experienced originally²⁵ by others. War and memory are linked through recollection by eyewitnesses who (re)construct, (re)present and recall the past, rendering it alive for subsequent generations. Much of social history is memory-based, influenced by what is selected for remembrance and it sets aside what is forgotten; memory is inevitably selective. Irish memories of the Emergency are linked to and frequently conflate the events, many recent, of the War of Independence, partition, the Civil War, and the Economic War which took place over a span of less than twenty years and which invoked the fractious on-going Irish-British relationship. Arguably, the border counties, and especially the geographically isolated Donegal, were more exposed than the rest of independent Ireland to the symbols and the reality of the “unfinished” political business between Ireland and the United Kingdom. Vibrant family recollections of the Emergency caused younger people living in the border area in the years after the war to blend their parents’ collective memories with their own perspective on continuing political and paramilitary activity, forming an inter-generational co-narration and re-imagining of the centuries-old relationship between the two countries. The experiences and recalled memories of the Gormallys, while obviously personal, are far from unique because they reveal in several ways the construction and transmission of wider community perceptions and generational change as manifested in evolving historical and altered geographical circumstances.

Martin Jarlath Gormally²⁶, the youngest of six sons and one daughter, was born in Brownesgrove, Co. Galway, a few minutes before midnight on 10 November 1922.

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24. For the issue of the witness in WWI, see Jean Norton Cru, *Du témoignage*, Paris, Gallimard, 1930, on line: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k11702995>; and Emile Dulong, *Journal de guerre d'un honnête homme (1939-1940)*, Nérac, Albret, 2015.
 25. Andrew Frayn, Terry Phillips, “Introduction: War and Memory”, *Journal of War and Culture Studies*, vol. 11, no. 3, 2018, p. 182.
 26. The family name was spelled as Gormley (from “*gorm-gal*”, blue stranger), which is also the more common spelling used in Ulster, except for the two youngest children, Frank and Martin who were registered as Gormally, the more common spelling in Connaught and the Midlands. The name originated in what is now County Donegal, more precisely in the barony of Raphoe; chiefs of *Cenel Moen* they descended from Moen son of Muireadach and belonged to the *Uí Néill* (O’Neill) dynasty. A second sept is found in the Partry Mountains of West Mayo. Middle and Early Modern Irish literary material indicates three queens named Gormlaith who died respectively in 861, 948 and 1030 (Máire Ní Mhaonaigh, “Tales of Three Gormlaiths in Medieval Literature”, *Ériu*, vol. 52, 2002, p. 1-24). Gormlaith (870-948), the poetess, was successively Queen of Tara, Munster and Leinster and left a body of poems which recount her personal distress in her final years. Her son Muirchertach Mac Néill was the ancestor of the O’Neill kingdom in Ulster to whom Gormleys were suppliers of horses in the Middle Ages; Gormleys continue today to be equine dealers, jockeys and veterinary surgeons in County Longford and the Midlands. The *Annals of Lough Key* record that members of the Gormghaile clan were abbots and hermits on Lough Key in the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries; Cinaeth Ó Gormghaile was erenagh of Elphin in the 14th century. In the 16th and 17th centuries, O’Gormleys were Priors of the Carmelite monastery at *Baile na Smólach*,

He has recorded his first-hand recollections of the Economic War (1932-1938) and the Emergency (1939-1946)²⁷, including rationing of food, clothing, fuel, fertiliser, and raw materials. The son of a smallholder, he remembers the compulsory tillage and turf production schemes. But there was also a lighter side when his family laughed nightly at Lord Haw-Haw's affected upper-class British accent referring to "the stuttery [*sic*] King!" and "the bandy-legged Queen!"²⁸.

The presence abroad of his three brothers was painful, especially for their mother. Fr. Patrick Gormley was chaplain to the Irish-Argentinean Hispanic community in Buenos Aires (1937-1947); letters were censored and took three months to arrive. Fr. Michael Gormley was a student in Rome during the war years. Despite the help of the Irish ambassador's wife, the County Mayo-born singer and collector of Irish ballads, Delia Murphy, Mussolini's regime made satisfactory communication with home nigh-well impossible. Travel was perilous and family members could not attend his ordination. A man of few words, he recounted to his nephews how he left Rome after ordination in 1943 and, wearing a leather helmet, a wool-lined leather jacket and leather gloves, he rode a motorcycle northward through Tuscany and along the Apennines before crossing by boat to Spain and travelling overland to Lisbon, the principal departure point for travel to the United Kingdom and across the Atlantic. In neutral Portugal, after a wait of several months, he obtained a seat on the regular K.L.M. / B.O.A.C. flight from Lisbon to Bristol. However, he was bumped off the flight at the last minute on 1 June 1943 to make room for the British actor Leslie Howard (Ashley in *Gone with the Wind*); the plane was shot down by the German *Luftwaffe* over the Bay of Biscay killing all seventeen people on board. The flight path was not normally a war zone but by 1943 the Germans were becoming increasingly nervous. Spies were common in Lisbon and Winston Churchill, returning from a conference in North Africa, was due to take the same flight, but acting on a premonition he changed his departure to the following day. The Germans considered Howard to be a serious anti-German propagandist, but it may also have been a random attack on an enemy plane. Failing to secure a seat on Flight 777 saved Fr. Michael Gormley's life. A graduate of the Gregorian University, Rome, he spoke fluent Italian and on reaching the United Kingdom, emaciated, clothes threadbare and with holes in the soles of his shoes, he became chaplain to an Italian prisoner of war camp in West Sussex. The prisoners of war presented him with a cigarette lighter which they made from a bronze shell casing. The brown-yellow metal lighter is a treasured family possession.

A third brother, Frank, a qualified carpenter-joiner by trade had emigrated to England in 1938 and was working in Coventry during the blitz bombing of

Co. Mayo (Stephen Josten, O. Carm., *Ballinasmale Carmelite Abbey 1288-1870*, Ballinasmale Abbey Conservation Committee, 16 July 1984, on line: <http://www.carmelites.ie/Ballinasmale.pdf>).

The original Gorm (b. before 900-d. 958) became the first recognised King of Denmark in 936.

27. Martin Gormally, "The Emergency – World War Two"; "World War Two – A Call to Arms"; "Landing of a Flying Fortress near Athenry in 1943", unpublished, n.d., n.p.

28. "Your stammering King and your bandy-legged Queen" ("The King's Speech: The Real Story", *The Telegraph*, 5 January 2011).

14-15 November 1940. Almost 600 people were killed, the exact number has never been established, and 1,250 were injured in what was the most severe of the Coventry bombings. Many bodies were discovered in the rubble and he recalled the mass burials which followed. During the second bombing on 8-9 April 1941, weary of going to the air-raid shelter, he remained in bed. A shell nosecone fuse pierced the roof and landed in bed beside him. A second National Service Act was passed by the UK government in December 1941 and Frank returned to County Galway early in 1942 bringing with him the 1kg nosecone. On 31 May 1941, Martin Gormally was on his first visit to Dublin for an interview and he recalls the extensive bomb damage in the North Strand area and the tactile fear among Dubliners that the Germans would return. The final bomb killed 28 people, injured 90, damaged 300 houses and left 400 people homeless. He was 18 years old and it left an indelible memory, which intensified as the years passed.

Martin's abiding wartime memory about which he has written²⁹ concerns his family's exposure to pre-WWII military conflict which occurred during the War of Independence and the Civil War, before his birth. Between 1919 and 1921 his father James (Jim) Gormley sold Dáil loans³⁰ on behalf of Michael Collins, Minister of Finance in the 1918 Provisional Government. On 19 July 1920³¹, at Gallagher Wood 400 metres from the family home in Brownesgrove, the IRA ambushed a Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) convoy, returning from the Galway Assize Court, killing two constables in the process. In retaliation the police went on an all-night rampage that evening in the town of Tuam nearby, where, on 20 July, the Black and Tans burned the Town Hall³². The same day Jim destroyed the official Provisional Government receipts for the funds which he had collected and forwarded to Dublin, for fear of discovery by the Tans³³. The receipts were hidden in the thatch of the roof and he first showed them to a neighbour as testimony to their existence, asking him to confirm he had seen them if necessary. The neighbour later reneged on his promise³⁴. Jim

29. Martin Gormally, "World War 2", in *Hearths and Homesteads: Memories and Recollections*, Bernie Doyle (ed.), Sligo, Sligo Active Retirement Writers, 2003, p. 36-40.

30. "Dáil Loans", *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/D%C3%A1il_loans.

31. "Timeline of the Irish War of Independence", *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_the_Irish_War_of_Independence; *The Tuam Herald*, 24 July 1920, on line: <http://places.galwaylibrary.ie/history/chapter377.html>.

32. Later that evening and the next day, 20 July 1920, the RIC sacked the town of Tuam, burning the Town Hall in the process, and threatened to burn the two thatched houses near Gallagher Wood including the Gormley family home. They desisted following the intervention of a neighbour, Major Leonard, Roscommon Militia; the perpetrators of the ambush were later discovered to have come mainly from the nearby village of Lavally.

33. Bonds for Dáil loans, issued by the self-proclaimed Irish Republic to fund the apparatus of government, were sold locally; the funds were transferred to Dublin and the bonds, signed by Michael Collins, were then issued directly to the purchasers. A lapse of time necessarily occurred between the cash transaction and the receipt of the actual bonds.

34. Jim Gormley, a herdsman on the O'Connor estate, Brownesgrove, had recently bought a plot of land with the help of an interest-free loan from his brother-in-law Andy Coen, Kilconly. For whatever reason, political or personal, his neighbour reneged on his promise, thereby silently insinuating misuse of the collected funds.

was subsequently arrested by the Black and Tans and interrogated for a full day at an isolated premises in Tullynadaly, Tuam, before being released without charge. He never spoke willingly about the experience. At the time of the ambush his eldest son, Joe Gormley, then 7 years old, was driving the cows in the adjoining *Cuan Ard* field overlooking the ambush scene when he came close to being caught in the crossfire. At his death in 2011 Joe, then in his 98th year, was the last living witness of the Gallagher ambush³⁵.

During the War of Independence in 1920, following a meeting of the Cortoon Coop, of which he was a member, Jim Gormley stopped at the public house on his way home. During the discussion, he objected publicly that IRA members had taken Cooperative goods without payment, and who, when challenged had replied: "We're fighting for your freedom. What is yours, is ours!". Later that night on the way home, he was left for dead by a group of men who beat him with their rifle butts. As he lay prone, the last assailant turned back, removed a large stone from the roadside wall, and dropped it above Jim's head. He moved his skull a fraction and the rock grazed his temple and cheek³⁶. When a new auxiliary police service, the Local Security Force, was created in May 1940, Jim promptly joined, and Martin followed his example by joining the new Local Defence Force in June 1940, which transferred to the army in January 1941. Martin's platoon was based at Cortoon, they trained with Lee Enfield rifles, bayonet and grenade and he proved to be a prizewinning sharpshooter. He was appointed adjutant to the platoon commander, the local primary school teacher. Reports were filed on a weekly basis; training took place in the evenings and on Sunday morning after mass; travel was by bicycle. Training was provided by an Irish army non-commissioned officer, Kevin Costello. The latter's brother Lieutenant General M. J. Costello was the godson of Thomas MacDonagh, signatory of the 1916 Proclamation of the Irish Republic; he later became director of training and later still commandant at the Irish Military College. In 1940 he was officer commanding Southern Command³⁷.

On 15 January 1943, Martin Gormally witnessed the American B-17 Flying Fortress which crash-landed among the spiked fields of the Agricultural College, Athenry where he was experiments officer. He recalls Tom, a College employee, greeting the first US soldier to emerge and climb down the steps, his hand on his holster pistol: "We'll not do anything to ye!" – "Where are we?" came the reply – "You're about a mile from Athenry, Sir!" – "What country?" – "Ireland!" – "North or South?" – "You're in the South, Sir! Sure, the North is up there in Belfast!". Fifteen US military personnel and one Royal Air Force (RAF) pilot then emerged, including two future US generals, Jakob Loucks Devers, later commander-in-chief

35. "Obituary – Mr Joe Gormley Beagh, Brownsgrrove, Tuam", *The Tuam Herald*, 23 March 2011, on line: <https://www.tuamherald.ie/2011/03/23/obituary-mr-joe-gormley-beagh-brownsgrrove-tuam/>; "Death of Last Witness of Gallagher Ambush", *The Tuam Herald*, 16 March 2011, on line: <https://www.tuamherald.ie/2011/03/16/death-of-last-witness-of-gallagher-ambush>.

36. For many decades Martin was not told the identity of the would-be-assassin: "*Ná bac a mhaicín, that man died roaring in America!*" ("Leave it, son [...]").

37. LSF and LDF volunteers took an oath of allegiance to the Irish state in 1942.

of all US ground army forces, and Edward Hales Brooks who later led the Second Armoured Division through Saint-Lô, France and accepted the surrender of the German forces in Innsbruck, Austria. A puff of smoke indicated that “Sparks” had destroyed the plane’s radio and the airmen passed around white-bread sandwiches, a delicacy compared to the black-brown bread made from inferior Irish wartime flour, and cigarettes. The Athenry LDF members promptly arrived by bicycle, their rifles slung over their shoulders, and surrounded the plane until the Irish Army secured the site; the dismantled bomber was later taken by road to Northern Ireland.

Post-WWII memories from Donegal and Sligo (1950s and 1960s)

Ireland in the immediate post-war period did not experience the rebuilding of cities and infrastructure due to wartime damage, as happened on the continent and in the United Kingdom, nor was repatriation a feature of life or the return of inmates from deportation and concentration camps. War veterans who had joined the British forces returned discretely to Ireland in some numbers, but the country did not experience the investment in facilities and infrastructure which was the case elsewhere. Ireland did not experience the *Trente Glorieuses*, which would come later with accession to the Common Market in 1973. In the 1950s there was relatively little mobility or resettlement throughout the country, secondary education was fee-paying, the Catholic Church exercised strong social control and the universities remained the reserve of a privileged elite. Foreign travel was generally unknown apart from pilgrimages to Lourdes and family visits to and from the United Kingdom; apart from border country residents, few ventured from the south into Northern Ireland. The birth rate was high, but the population continued to fall. Fianna Fáil dominated national politics, and the failure of the Mother and Child Scheme was detrimental to the emergence of a new political force. Agriculture dominated the economy, employing 40% of the population, and was in a dire state; industrial development and foreign direct investment would only come after the Tánaiste and Minister for Industry and Commerce, later Taoiseach, Seán Lemass launched the first Programme for Economic Development in 1958; there was a copy of the blue-covered book, *Economic Development*, in Martin Gormally’s house. Free secondary education came in 1965.

In 1955 Martin and his wife Grace moved with their three children under three years of age from Ballyhaunis, Co. Mayo, to the Lagan in East Donegal. It was a considerable distance to travel at the time, and they discovered an aspect of living in Ireland which they had not experienced since their all-Ireland honeymoon tour in August 1951. Donegal was then an exotic destination for people from Connaught, and Northern Ireland was alien territory. Following an initial failed dash to obtain a temporary entry pass into Northern Ireland, they had arrived in Portstewart, Co. Derry, on a Sunday evening to find every establishment closed in the seaside town; their honeymoon photograph, taken in a Belfast studio, is testimony to the elegance worthy of a regional capital city. Beltany Hill near Raphoe, where they

first settled, 10 km from the border with County Tyrone, Northern Ireland, and coincidentally the place of origin of the medieval Gormley clan, was an area redolent with social and religious symbols of empire harking back to pre-Partition Ireland. Martin's memories of the Anglo-Irish Trade War and the Emergency meshed with his new experience of the post-war political, economic, and cultural reality of living on the border with three Northern counties. The children listened to their father's account of the economic depression of the 1930s and the tensions associated with the Emergency, but they were aware also of a new layer of experiences and memories which were being forged in their re-located Donegal border experience.

On moving to Newtowncunningham in the Lagan, at the foot of the Inishowen peninsula, 11 km from the Derry border crossing at Bridge End, the children played among the remnants of empire in the Treaty Port defences at Fort Dunree and at Lenan Head Fort overlooking Lough Swilly. The rusting canons of the Breech Loading, Quick Firing and 24 Pounder guns, which were operational during WWI, appeared in the eyes of children as the trophies of a military conflict in which Ireland had been victorious. They contemplated reminders of partition during regular family journeys across the border: the presence of Irish and British customs officers, vehicle searches for contraband goods and spiked roads which were impassable to vehicular traffic. The youngsters' understanding of the War of Independence and the relationship between Ireland and the United Kingdom was reinforced by the physical reality of the border and the changes visible on the Northern side where red letterboxes and telephone kiosks, smooth road surfaces and clear road markings, and neatly trimmed roadside hedges were material signs that they had entered a foreign country. Armed Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) policemen differed from the unarmed *Garda Síochána*, and war memorials such as those in Enniskillen and Omagh, the Diamond in Derry and in Sion Mills, were almost totally absent on the other side of the border. Non-residents and regular travellers had to bond their car with the Northern authorities via a personal local contact on the other side; a triangular yellow Triptych was displayed on the car windscreen. In a child's eyes there was something exotic about Strabane and Derry compared to the quiet villages of Raphoe and Newtowncunningham, where non-locals and cars from adjoining Connaught were rarely seen.

The strangeness was tangible in the attractive consumer products not then available in Donegal – Opal Fruits, Spangles, Mars Bars and Milky Ways – but was even more visible in the fact that on Sundays all shops, cafés, parks, playgrounds and public conveniences were closed and locked; the children's swings were chained. The children had a pre-Covid-19 experience of physical distancing on visits to Strabane during the Northern Ireland polio epidemic of 1957 when they were instructed not to touch the glittering offerings on display in Woolworths and Wellworths. They passed regularly by the US naval vessels and sailors which were stationed in Derry port from 1943 until 1977. The ships were a stark reminder of the 300,000 US troops stationed in Northern Ireland at any one time between 1942 and 1944, when the cumulative total number of US servicemen passing through the six counties of Ulster surpassed the total local population. There were RAF bases in County

Derry at Eglinton (closed in 1958), while St. Angelo's, Enniskillen (demolished in 1996) included a base for flying boats on Lough Erne. RAF bases had existed at Killadeas and Castle Archdale (closed in 1945) also in County Fermanagh; while at Ballykelly, Co. Derry (closed in 1971), they saw RAF aircraft on the tarmac and in the air, the distinctive circular markings clearly visible from a distance. Ireland and Northern Ireland shared a common intra-Irish pseudo-neutrality during WWII, the finer points of which puzzled but did not escape the understanding of those crossing regularly into the North in the post-war years. A secret agreement between Dublin and London allowed British flying boats to access the Atlantic via the Donegal Corridor and de Valera promptly sent fire brigades from Dublin to Belfast following the German blitz bombings in 1941. Over 1,000 people died, 1,500 were injured and thousands of houses damaged³⁸ in the greatest loss of life during any night-time blitz air raid outside London.

British culture featured in Donegal border country households during the 1950s by virtue of BBC and ITV signals from masts in Northern Ireland, long before the creation of Irish TV (*Teilifís Éireann*, 31 December 1961) which was not initially available in County Donegal. Unbeknownst to their parents, the Gormally children watched the trial of Adolf Eichmann (1961) on the BBC. The stark black and white pictures of the apparently indifferent and ordinary-looking defendant sitting in a bulletproof glass cage, were confirmation that something terrible had happened in neighbouring European countries less than a generation previously. Social relations in the mixed religious community of the Lagan (Roman Catholics, Church of Ireland, Presbyterians, Non-Conformists) were good and frequently excellent, despite an unspoken awareness of historical, social, and political differences. The historical memory of cultural difference was heightened by the existence of Orange Lodges and parades in County Donegal, while respected neighbours joined the RUC and yet others were rumoured to cross the border by night to serve with the infamous Northern B-Specials.

Several Orange Order lodges existed in County Donegal and an Orange parade still takes place annually at Rossnowlagh. In Newtowncunningham the Orange Hall stands next door to the Catholic parish priest's house and was the venue for Irish dancing classes in the late 1950s, which the older children attended. On 12 July each year, bowler-hatted Donegal Orangemen crossed the border into Derry to carry the Loyal Orange Lodge banners at the parade. The impressive banners depicted King William riding into battle at the Boyne in 1690 and woe betide anyone who dared question that sacred memory or the annual celebration of "No surrender!". Patrick Gormally recalls that on 12 July 1967 his attempts to cross Shipquay Street during the parade, to get a better view, were considered an offence, and brought immediate attention from the RUC men on duty. The parade was subtly religious; it was in fact an open meeting of the Orange Lodge, which usually met in church on the morning of the Twelfth for a Bible reading. In St. Augustine's, "the wee church

38. "Belfast Blitz", *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belfast_Blitz.

on the walls” of Derry, marble plaques recall British servicemen killed in action, as do Anglican and Presbyterian churches all over Ireland, unlike their Roman Catholic counterparts where statues and stained-glass windows recall the lives of saints. The aisle in St. Augustine’s is still covered in the same blue carpet that graced many Donegal sitting rooms of the 1960s, but the comfortable similarity merely papered over a rift which reflected different feelings and attitudes heightened on every 12 July. The Orange street parade recalls in fact a medieval pre-Reformation theological origin and is ironically comparable to the extant Roman Catholic practice, exemplified in the *Corpus Christi* parade, in which the Blessed Sacrament, the sacred memory, is paraded in public for the edification of the community³⁹.

In May 1968, the Gormally family moved to Sligo, then the principal town in the North West of Ireland and once known as “Little Belfast”⁴⁰, where the British Legion Celtic cross on Pearse Road is the venue for the annual 11 November Armistice Remembrance Day ceremony. It was not however an ecumenical event in the 1960s and in Ireland the wearing of the Poppy remains a sensitive subject to this day.

When the Troubles broke out in Northern Ireland in August 1969, the British army was called in for what would become the longest continuous deployment in British military history⁴¹. In the Autumn of 1969, Patrick Gormally, a boarder at the Irish-language Holy Cross College (*Coláiste na Croise Naofa*), Falcarragh, Co. Donegal, travelled by bus with a group of school football supporters to Monaghan for a MacRory Cup Gaelic football match which entailed two border crossings in each direction. On the return journey and late at night the bus was stopped at the British military checkpoint at Aughnacloy on the Monaghan-Tyrone border. The schoolboys were ordered to disembark and stand facing the roadside hedge with their arms outstretched while the bus was searched. In the darkness, lit only by two checkpoint lamps, camouflaged British paratroopers, their faces blackened, lay prone in the undergrowth, their Bren machine guns trained on the schoolboys. The soldiers’ eyes, visible in the darkness, made the schoolboys wonder about their marksmanship; they were little older than themselves. Patrick’s experience caused Martin to recount once again his own time in the LDF. To which he added the account of his subsequently making a wrong turn late at night on the A5 near Enniskillen on the way back from a conference in Dublin in February 1957. He found himself lost outside an RUC barracks in Omagh, driving a Mayo-registered car, one month after the deaths in January of that year of Sean South and a second IRA man during a dramatic armed attack led by Sean Garland on the RUC barracks at Brookeborough some 40 km distant. His Western colleagues travelling with him were not impressed.

39. The author thanks Professor William J. Smyth, co-author with Cecil J. Houston of *The Sash Canada Wore: A Historical Geography of the Orange Order in Canada*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1980.

40. Edward Larrissy, *W. B. Yeats* [1998], Tavistock, Northcote House, 2015, p. 10; W. J. McCormack, *Blood Kindred. W. B. Yeats. The Life, the Death, the Politics* [2005], Random House eBook, 2011, n.p.

41. “Operation Banner”, *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Banner.

Martin's oft-repeated account of the Emergency during the IRA Border Campaign (December 1956–February 1962), framed against the background of the Civil War, shaped his son's representation of living on the border and his own brief encounter with British military force, one memory blending uneasily into the other.

Later memories from the 1970s and 1980s

The Gormally family memories illustrate the temporal model of multiperspectivity in the transmission of memories and in history education. A Dutch research project⁴² on the teaching of history shows that however scientific the teachers' focus may be, it is counterbalanced by normativity. The research identifies three temporal layers in how multiperspectivity is taught in the history classroom. The first layer is "in the past" and refers to subjects who were contemporaries of historical events. The second layer is "between past and present" and concerns individuals who were not contemporaries of the events and who lived later, but who have become involved in the transmission and historical interpretation. An example is Martin Gormally's Civil War family anecdotes from the year of his birth and his later perception of contemporary events during the Emergency based on his own experience in the LDF, both of which were marked by his own personal emotions. His rendition of the earlier events was not experiential but received lore. This layer absorbs the past, be it as history or the reception of recounted tales, and the individuals concerned reconcile the historicity of the accounts and the methods used to record and transmit them: "[...] the idiosyncratic function of this temporal layer can be labeled [*sic*] 'historiographical perspective taking'"⁴³. Examples are the perception by Martin Gormally of the War of Independence as recounted by his father, and his children's received lore of the evolution of British-Irish relations. The third temporal layer is "in the present" and concerns those who develop a contemporary understanding of a historical event. The difference with the previous layer is that it concerns teachers and pupils who are aware that some perspectives are personal and that they themselves are also consumers of history, with the teacher acting as the interpreter of what past events "really" mean. In the classroom, events are studied in an informed manner and pupils are encouraged to construct their own critical understanding. Martin Gormally's longevity (he is in his 99th year) and the clarity of his memories, make the model of temporality pertinent here. By covering a century of historical events, the transmission of his memories illustrates how inter-generational memory evolves to form the basis of what each age cohort perceived, understood and retained:

42. Bjorn Wansink, Sanne Akkerman, Itzél Zuiker, Theo Wubbels, "Where Does Teaching Multiperspectivity in History Education Begin and End? An Analysis of the Uses of Temporality", *Theory and Research in Social Education*, vol. 36, no. 4, 2018, p. 495-527, on line: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00933104.2018.1480439>.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 498.

"[...] not all perspectives were perceived as equally valid or politically desirable, showing where multiperspectivity ends"⁴⁴.

Family memories of the War of Independence, the Civil War, the Anglo-Irish Trade War, and the Emergency influenced in several ways the perception of the Troubles by the second generation⁴⁵. In August 1970 Patrick was working as a temporary barman in a Sligo public house when the proprietor failed to return from a day trip to Derry, the site of the two-day Battle of the Bogside in 1969. A Republican sympathiser, he was arrested for disorderly behaviour outside a public house and as a result spent six months in Crumlin Road jail, Belfast. His incarceration caused considerable disruption to the running of the family business but did not affect trade. On Bloody Sunday 30 January 1972, British soldiers killed 26 unarmed civilians in Derry during a protest march against internment without trial. A general strike was declared in Ireland and services were held in places of worship of all major religions. Patrick participated in several days of heated public meetings at Maynooth College. Interpretation and analysis of the horrific events in Derry were informed by inherited perceptions of the centuries-long, fraught relationship of Ireland and the United Kingdom and in commemoration of the lives lost it was initially suggested that all University members should travel to Derry on 2 February as the funerals of the victims began to take place. Instead, the quasi-entire College population of 1,000 students walked with academic and other staff members the 25 km to central Dublin in protest; it took seven hours. Dublin city centre came to a standstill and a crowd of 20,000-30,000 people⁴⁶ converged on a packed Merrion Square where they witnessed the petrol-bombing of the British Embassy by a small group of individuals who entered from the building next door in defiance of a *Garda* presence. They watched in the pouring rain as the crowd prevented fire-engines from getting through, cut the firemen's water hoses, and chanted "Burn, burn, burn". The building imploded at 6 p.m. and was destroyed.

Two years later Martin Gormally's memories of war and community conflict were reinforced on 17 May 1974 when he experienced at first hand the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) bombs on Talbot Street, Dublin which killed 33 civilians and left 300 injured. Traffic chaos hindered his attempts to collect his daughter before leaving the city and the telephone system did not permit contacting his family. Like the burning of the British Embassy, the arson and car bombs brought home what was happening north of the border.

The narrative of contemporary events was inserted into and distilled within Martin's and Patrick's memorised and existential experiences which were confirmed and enriched during their annual travels in France between 1984 and 2014. They

44. Bjorn Wansink, Sanne Akkerman, Itzél Zuiker, Theo Wubbels, "Where Does Teaching Multiperspectivity in History Education Begin and End?...", "Abstract".

45. For the concept of postmemory see Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory. Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2012.

46. Simon Hoggart, "From the Archive, 3 February 1972: British Embassy Petrol Bombed in Dublin", *The Guardian*, 3 February 2015.

visited military cemeteries in Normandy, including Utah Beach in 2004, and they travelled through Saint-Lô which was liberated by General Edward Hales Brooks, who had been a passenger on the Flying Fortress at Athenry in January 1943. At Pegasus Bridge, on the canal between Caen and the sea, Martin admired the restored British Centaur IV tank emblazoned with the US star insignia to assist identification on D-Day, and the US star awoke the image of the Athenry crash-landing. Then, 82 years of age, he climbed up on the tank tread and, wearing a Canadian Tilley hat, gave an American-style military salute in memory of his comrades and their service in the LDF. It would be erroneous to confuse his gesture with that of an excited tourist; it combined all the solemnity of a military commemoration and the earnestness of a pilgrim in a sacred place. On visiting Bayeux and the Overlord Museum at Omaha Beach, Colleville, directly overlooking the sea, he suddenly stopped, straightened up and struck off alone to the ticket desk, stood to attention, saluted, and introduced himself as an *ancien combattant*. The cashier promptly issued a free entrance ticket, reserved for veterans and war widows. Martin visited the Jean Moulin⁴⁷ museums in Bordeaux and in Paris, was shaken by the burned village of Oradour-sur-Glane in Haute-Vienne and was impressed by the military artefacts at the demarcation museum in Tercé, reminiscent of the Irish border. He listened to the WWI and WWII stories of his French daughter-in-law's family, admiring her paternal grandfather's⁴⁸ decorations, including the *Légion d'honneur*; and he attended the annual commemoration of the 1944 skirmish between a retreating German column and local resistance fighters, when their village narrowly escaped becoming a second Oradour-sur-Glane⁴⁹.

The French military medals proved serendipitous when he mentioned them later during a visit to his own family home in Brownesgrove, and his brother Joe produced an Irish military medal, a *Bonn Seirbhíse Éigeandála*⁵⁰ inscribed *Na Caomhnóirí Áitiúla*⁵¹, which had been awarded to their father by the Irish

47. Martin invariably compares the story of Jean Moulin to Michael Collins in Ireland.

48. Pierre Baranger, an infantry captain in WWI, later general, was military instructor at Saint-Maixent and a member of President Paul Doumer's *maison militaire*. His family briefly fled Paris in 1940 and were visited regularly in Montparnasse by the Gestapo during WWII. His son Guy, a fluent German-speaker and an experienced traveller in pre-war Germany, participated in the *drôle de guerre* in Moselle in 1939, was at the Battle of Dunkerque and later became a militant pacifist. Martin Gormally's French daughter-in-law, Marie-Cécile Baranger's maternal granduncles fought in the French Air Force and Navy in WWI and WWII and Admiral Octave Montrelay scuttled his cruiser *La Marseillaise* on orders in Toulon harbour in November 1942. His brother-in-law Joseph Brisset, *Croix de guerre* WWI, was killed in Auray by a stray bullet during the German retreat from Lorient in 1944 where a street bears his name. Martin was impressed by the French family's wartime stories.

49. On 25 August 1944 Lieutenant Fontaine of the *maquis* was killed in Anché during a skirmish with a German column retreating northwards. An annual commemoration takes place at the cross marking the spot. On 10 June 1944, at Oradour-sur-Glane, 100 km from Anché, the village population of 642 people was burned alive in the church by a retreating German column.

50. Emergency Service Medal.

51. Local Security Force. It is mounted on red ribbon, like British war medals, with one vertical white stripe and a service bar indicating four years' service.

Department of Defence for his LSF service, and which had been discovered “in the back of a drawer”. Martin wrote to the Department of Defence in Dublin outlining his own service in the LDF citing names, places, dates, and details of his Cortoon platoon activity. A small green box was delivered within the week containing a similar but different medal inscribed *An Fórsa Cosanta Áitiúil*⁵². Decorations in post-independent Ireland are relatively rare and are reserved for the defence and security forces. None of the Gormally family from Galway and very few of their neighbouring Protestant farmers in Donegal had any active engagement in WWII and British army medals are in any case a rare sight in Ireland. The Gormally medals are now in safekeeping⁵³.

Contested memory: the example of Austria

Ireland participated in WWII without military conflict reaching Irish shores. The experience reawakened centuries-old strife-ridden memories of the relationship with the United Kingdom. An interesting comparison may be made with how Austria managed its fraught relationship with Nazi Germany. Martin’s granddaughter, continuing the Irish tradition of emigration, settled in Vienna in 2006. Her Austrian in-laws and Martin’s great-grandson, Killian Gormally’s Austrian great-grandmother, who lives in Lower Austria, had first-hand experience of WWII⁵⁴. The example of Franz Jägerstätter⁵⁵, the Austrian conscientious objector who refused to serve Nazism, could not but impress Irish Catholics; he was executed in 1943 and later beatified by the Catholic Church. The Irish-British relationship, all things being equal, has arguably some commonality with the Austrian Victim Theory⁵⁶ developed in 1949⁵⁷ by historians and politicians⁵⁸

52. Local Defence Force. It is the later issue with two vertical white stripes on a shorter red ribbon.

53. Those from southern Ireland who enlisted in the British Merchant Navy and the Armed Forces availed of military and professional career paths greater than what was on offer in the Irish Army in 1940, including training, travel, adventure, and up-to-date equipment. By enlisting Irish people did not express any decreased sense of national identity and young Irish professionals served in the British forces before rising to the higher echelons of British society. It was likewise the case for an earlier generation. A private source confirms the existence of a contemporary of Kevin Barry at the University College Dublin Faculty of Medicine who later became a consultant to members of the British Royal family and who treasured a letter Barry had written him the night before his execution.

54. On 14 March 1938 Frau Franziska Birgmayr-Lechner, then 7 years old, the Austrian great-grandmother of Martin Gormally’s great-grandson Killian Gormally (Vienna), watched in Sankt Pölten, Lower Austria as Hitler’s motorcade was greeted on the way to Vienna.

55. See Terrence Malick, *A Hidden Life*, Studios de Babelsberg, December 2019; Aurélie Le Née, “Jägerstätter de Felix Mitterer. Universalité d’un destin individuel”, *Études germaniques*, vol. 4, no. 296, 2019, p. 677-691. To an Irish reader the story is a reminder of Saint Oliver Plunkett (1625-1681), the last Catholic martyr to die in England, who was hanged, drawn and quartered because of the so-called Popish Plot concocted by Titus Oates.

56. “Austria Victim Theory”, *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Austria_victim_theory.

57. “Austrian Resistance”, *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Austrian_resistance.

58. “Austria Victim Theory”, *Wikipedia*.

according to which neither Austria, an invaded country and the first victim of the 1938 *Anschluss*, nor Austrians, were responsible for German Nazi war crimes. The Austrian view was that both countries were diametrically opposed regarding ethnic origin, religion, and language. Many Austrians participated unwillingly in the *Wehrmacht*, and up to 100,000 resisted. Kurt Schuschnigg, the Chancellor in 1938, accepted that Austria was a German state, but he opposed Hitler, yet he failed in preserving Austrian independence⁵⁹. In an initiative not unlike the ideological position in Ireland North and South, Austrian historians began rewriting history as early as 1940, to emphasise the distinct ancient origins of *Ostarrichi* (996)⁶⁰ and the differences between Austria and Germany. In a Nazi initiative which recalls aspects of the English colonisation of Ireland, the name by which Austria was previously known was changed on two occasions during the Occupation. It became *Ostmark* (Eastern March) in 1938, and this was replaced by *Alpen-und Donau-Reichsgaue* (Alpine and Danube Region) in 1942. This effectively reinforced the integration of Austria⁶¹ in the *Reich* but replaced the name of the country with a new non-Austrian territory⁶². The Victim Theory claimed⁶³ that Austrians were not genetically German, that the population was mainly Catholic and not Protestant like northern and central Germany, and that a common language did not determine a common culture; similar claims regarding Ireland and Britain are not unknown. After the war, the original German term *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, which specifically regarded the debate in Germany about collective culpability, meant de-Nazification in Austria. In reaction, Thomas Bernhard's controversial play *Heldenplatz* (1988)⁶⁴ illustrates Austrian complicity in Nazi war crimes and was taught in Austrian schools in the 1990s⁶⁵. While restitution has since gone some way to putting things right, memories of WWII remain problematic; memory

59. "Kurt Schuschnigg", *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurt_Schuschnigg. He resigned, was arrested, and interned until 1945.

60. "Name of Austria", *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Name_of_Austria.

61. "Austria – 20th Century", *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Austria#20th_century.

62. Contempt for the designation of Ireland, following the 1937 Constitution, is seen in British insistence on public use of "*Eire*", without the acute accent, and not "*Éire*" as clearly stated in the official Irish-language version. The use of "*Eire*" in French without the acute accent and rhyming with "*air*" e.g., "*Quelque chose dans l'Eire*" [*sic*], is anachronistically representative of an insensitive linguistic if not also a pejorative political practice. The practice was abandoned by the British government only in 1998 following the Good Friday Agreement and when Ireland dropped the territorial claim to Northern Ireland ("*Éire*", *Wikipedia*, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%89ire>).

63. "Austria Victim Theory", *Wikipedia*.

64. "*Heldenplatz* (play)", *Wikipedia*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heldenplatz_\(play\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heldenplatz_(play)). Frank McGuinness' play, *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching Towards the Somme* (1985), while dealing with several topics, draws attention to the fact that Irishmen North and South fought in the British Army in WWI.

65. Austrian Embassy in Washington, "Austria Extends Citizenship to Descendants of Victims of Nazi Persecution", on line: <https://www.austria.org/the-latest/2019/10/7/austrian-citizenship-descendants-victims-nazi-persecution>.

politics are “such a contested field”⁶⁶ in Austria, and such could be said to be also the case in Ireland, North and South.

The study of war and memory is “based on the concepts of representation, memory and identity”⁶⁷. Those who have not known war at first hand come to know the horror and the inhumanity, the abhorrent and the unknown by means of the imagination, through the memories, stories and evocations of witnesses and creative artists alike⁶⁸. It can be argued that Austrian novelists and short-story writers played a role in legitimising or at least trivialising WWII in the immediate post-war period by creating a “collectively exonerating and distorting” impression of the war as “a certain image of history began to take shape against the background of the Cold War”⁶⁹. The complexity and the embarrassing silence concerning WWII is evident in the Red Army monument in Vienna, built by the Soviets, and which commemorates the 17,000 Soviet soldiers who died at the Battle of Vienna in February 1945⁷⁰. Robert Musil, the Austrian author, believed that monuments like this become invisible and immune to public notice⁷¹. The Schwarzenbergplatz memorial, maintained by the Austrian authorities and refurbished by the city⁷², is a stark reminder that war memorials can be perceived as “immutable statements”⁷³. On the other hand, not all monuments are fixed points: “[...] their meanings and interpretations can and do change over time in response to political and cultural shifts”⁷⁴. The more recent memorial against war and fascism (*Mahnmal gegen Krieg und Faschismus*, 1988) on Albertinaplatz, is a discrete and relatively invisible sculpture of a Jewish man on his knees washing the street and which, although “out of tune with an established cultural memory, [...] continues to occupy public space”⁷⁵. A profound

66. Werner Wintersteiner, “Angel of Oblivion. Literature and Memory Politics in Austria”, *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research*, vol. 32, no. 3, 2019, p. 385.

67. Debra Kelly, “War! What Is It Good For?”, *Journal of War and Culture Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1, August 2007, p. 4.

68. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

69. Karl Müller, “Images of the Second World War in Austrian Literature after 1945”, *Studies in 20th and 21st Century Literature*, vol. 31, no. 1, 2007, p. 51. See analysis of works by Erich Landgrebe, Erich Kern, Hans Gustl Kernmayr, Kurt Ziesel and the contrasting work of Herbert Zand, Gerhard Fritsch and Ingeborg Bachmann.

70. The *Heldendenkmal der Roten Armee* (“heroes’ monument of the Red Army”), located at Vienna’s Schwarzenbergplatz, was planned before the battle had started and it was inaugurated the same year (<http://www.tourmycountry.com/austria/soviet-memorial-vienna.htm>).

71. Werner Fenz, “The Monument Is Invisible, the Sign Visible”, Maria-Regina Kecht (trans.), *October*, vol. 48, Spring 1989, p. 75-78.

72. “Soviet War Memorial (Vienna)”, *Wikipedia*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_War_Memorial_\(Vienna\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_War_Memorial_(Vienna)).

73. Bill Niven, “War Memorials at the Intersection of Politics, Culture and Memory”, *Journal of War and Culture Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2007, p. 39.

74. Samantha Oliver, “No offence to Robert Musil, But... The Continuing Relevance of Monuments”, *Public Seminar*, 6 April 2018, on line: <https://publicseminar.org/2018/04/no-offense-to-robert-musil-but>.

75. Tanja Schult, “The Performative Power of a Problematic Public Work: Art-Interventions at Alfred Hrdlicka’s *Memorial Against War and Fascism* in Vienna”, *Public Art Dialogue*, vol. 8, no. 2, 2018, p. 231-257.

and complex if enigmatic sculpture, unnoticed and bypassed by many who do not read the explanatory inscription, it may be “a symptom of the changing Austrian memory culture of the late 1980s”⁷⁶. The recent official Vienna Deserters’ Monument, *Denkmal für die Verfolgten der NS-Militärjustiz*, 2014 (“memorial for the victims of Nazi military justice”)⁷⁷, honours Austrians who deserted from the *Wehrmacht*. It is a substantial sculpture but also a horizontal one, “invisible” because it is easy to miss and hard to find. The perceived discomfort associated with Austria’s role in WWII has not fully disappeared.

War memorials in Ireland

A detailed examination of the past, *mionchíoradh an ama atá caite*, shakes things up, but Irish historiography has also displayed an ambivalence and uncertainty about inclusive narration of the past by avoiding awkward aspects of WWII or the Emergency, and the underlying relationship with the United Kingdom, which remained troubled and unclear until the late 1980s.

During WWII neither Ireland, officially neutral, nor Northern Ireland, officially at war, suffered the levels of deprivation, displacement and destruction that were experienced on the continent of Europe. While food, fuel and raw materials were scarce, the island of Ireland was spared the numerous concentration camps, the forced labour, the conscription, the bombing, the deportation, and the holocaust of Western and Central European countries. Nor was there a resistance movement during WWII. The previous Irish example of resistant intelligence, communication and military activity belonged to the period between the Home Rule Crisis in 1912 and the end of the Civil War in 1923, and it generated a multiplicity of accounts of conflict depending on which side was involved. Similarly, at the end of WWII there was no political settling of accounts as followed the liberation of France in 1944-1945. In Ireland, such scores had been settled during the Civil War and left a bitter memory which resurfaced when wartime experiences during the Emergency were recounted. Since the Nine Years’ War in the late 16th-early 17th century, followed by the plantation of Ulster⁷⁸, the later population displacement under Cromwell, and the Williamite settlements, and discounting the non-military fatalities of the Great Famine, Irish families had experienced nothing like that endured by the

76. Tanja Schult, Diana I. Popescu, “Infelicitous Efficacy: Alfred Hrdlicka’s *Memorial Against War and Fascism*”, *Artículo. Journal of Urban Research*, no. 19, 2019, on line: <https://journals.openedition.org/articulo/4014>.

77. “Denkmal für die Verfolgten der NS-Militärjustiz in Wien”, <http://www.deserteursdenkmal.at>.

78. See Breandán Ó Doibhlin, *Sliocht ar Thír na Scáth*, Baile Átha Cliath, Coiscéim, 2018, p. 275. This historical novel explores Gaelic identity during the 17th century campaign of population displacement and replacement by English settlers, led by Sir Arthur Chichester, and the resistance of native families in County Tyrone (Pádraig Ó Gormáile, review of Breandán Ó Doibhlin, *Sliocht ar Thír na Scáth*, *Feasta*, May 2018, p. 15).

populations of Poland and the Ukraine⁷⁹. Yet, Irish family wartime memories, while more benign were nonetheless real and the resulting fuzziness makes it difficult to discern their true nature.

The difficult and entangled tensions are illustrated by the number, nature, and location of war memorials in Ireland North and South. In Northern Ireland memorials generally commemorate WWI and WWII on the same monument, as is common in France and in Austria. The diverging history of pre-independence and pre-partition Ireland means that many of the memorials that do exist south of the border tend to commemorate WWII in particular. Many Irish war memorials⁸⁰ are found in Church of Ireland (Anglican) and Reformed churches or in Protestant confessional schools and associations and, north of the border, they also commemorate the dead of the British armed forces in Ireland. One such monument at Dollingstown⁸¹, Co. Down, commemorates “our men who fell in the Great War” and it also remembers the fallen in WWII and during the Irish War of Independence, all on the British side, in an obviously time specific and selective commemoration. A number of southern memorials are found in different neutral venues such as cemeteries⁸², harbours⁸³, parks⁸⁴, and streets⁸⁵, but few are in or even near Roman Catholic churches or institutions. Memorials to those lost at sea are an exception in that they avoid any ideological identity. The Howth Fishermens’ Association erected a monument in 1994, which pointedly: “[...] commemorates the lives of all persons lost at sea, no matter where or no matter how”⁸⁶. The older of two Wexford quayside monuments commemorates British ships lost at sea and also the Irish Shipping boat *Irish Pine*, torpedoed by a U-boat in 1942 with a loss of 33 crew⁸⁷. The more recent monument, erected in 2015, commemorates the Wexford seamen who rescued 168 German sailors in the

79. Between 1941 and 1944 it is estimated that over 2,000,000 of the 3,000,000 *Ostarbeiter* (Eastern Workers) brought to Germany came from Ukraine (“*Ostarbeiter*”, *Wikipedia*, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ostarbeiter>). After the war most were forcibly repatriated to the USSR, where they were persecuted by the Soviet authorities for having “collaborated” with the enemy; only a minority succeeded in re-settling in Belgium and in France (“*Ostarbeiter*”, *Internet Encyclopedia of Ukraine*, <http://www.encyclopediaofukraine.com/display.asp?linkpath=pages%5CO%5CS%5COstarbeiterIT.htm>). See Sylvie Mossay, “Slave Labour and Its Legacies: My Maternal Grandparents’ Journey from Ukraine to Germany to Belgium”, in *Family Histories of World War II. Survivors and Descendants*, Róisín Healy, Gearóid Barry (eds.), London, Bloomsbury, 2021.

80. “World War II Memorials in Ireland”, *Irish War Memorials*, <http://www.irishwarmemorials.ie/Memorials?warId=2&button=Go>. 60% of the memorials listed on the Island of Ireland commemorate WWII only. In the South, this figure rises to 70%.

81. “Dollingstown War Memorial”, *Irish War Memorials*, <http://www.irishwarmemorials.ie/Memorials-Detail?memoId=608>.

82. Mount Saint Lawrence, Limerick; Glasnevin.

83. Howth; Wexford; Union Hall (Co. Cork); Loughshinney (Co. Dublin).

84. Mayo Peace Park, Castlebar; South Mall, Cork City; Islandbridge, Dublin 8.

85. North Strand, Dublin 1; City Quay, Dublin 2; Nenagh; Sligo Town.

86. “Dublin 13, Howth Harbour”, *Irish War Memorial*, <http://www.irishwarmemorials.ie/Place-Detail?siteId=485>.

87. Another Irish Shipping vessel, the *Irish Oak*, was also sunk by a U-boat in May 1943.

Bay of Biscay in December 1943. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission monument in Glasnevin cemetery⁸⁸ and the Grangegorman British Military Cemetery on Blackhorse Avenue, Dublin 7, commemorate fallen Irish members of the British forces in both world wars.

The history of the Irish National War Memorial Gardens⁸⁹ is testimony to the troubled history of Irish war memorials and the difficulty in discerning what attitudes existed behind appearances. The Memorial Gardens were dedicated in memory of the 49,000 Irish soldiers who died in WWI in the British and Allied armies of Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, and the United States. First proposed in 1919, prior to independence, the project had a troubled history, prominent city centre sites were proposed and rejected between 1924 and 1927, before the final riverside site in Islandbridge was agreed in 1930. Work began in 1932-1933, undertaken in equal parts by Irish and British ex-servicemen. De Valera's government continued to provide financial support despite the economic difficulties of the Anglo-Irish Trade War. Technical problems arose in 1937-1938 relating to botanical matters, and the looming threat of WWII caused the cancellation of the planned inauguration in July 1939. No official opening ever occurred, but an Armistice Day commemoration took place in 1940. Designed by the British architect Sir Edwin Lutyens, the magnificent sloping landscaped riverside site contained several outstanding horticultural and architectural features, and the work was carried out in harmony by the ex-servicemen. Despite initial success among the public, use of the Gardens decreased after WWII due to a prevailing national ideology adverse to participation by Irish-born volunteers in WWI and in WWII. The Gardens were never officially inaugurated, they fell into disuse and neglect. In 1956 and again in 1958, during the IRA campaign against British rule, the fifth such campaign in the 20th century, there were two unsuccessful attempts to bomb the stone monuments. In the 1960s and 1970s, the Gardens became dilapidated, they were used as a caravan park for the Traveller community and as a rubbish dump by Dublin Corporation. Irish membership of the European Union in 1973 and economic growth in the 1980s took place simultaneously with a change in cultural perception and a reviewed sense of history and national identity⁹⁰. The damage of fifty years was repaired, and the Gardens re-opened to the public in 1988 following a ceremony with the four main Christian Churches. Since then, the 90th and Centenary commemorations of the Battle of the Somme took place there in 2006 and 2016, and Queen Elizabeth II of England laid a wreath during

88. "CWGC WW II Memorial", *Irish War Memorial*, <http://www.irishwarmemorials.ie/Memorials-Detail?memoId=962>.

89. "Irish National War Memorial Gardens", *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irish_National_War_Memorial_Gardens.

90. See Frank McGuinness, *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching towards the Somme*, 1985. The play provoked a debate about the identity, the motivation, and the bravery of Irish soldiers at the Somme and the nature of the identity of Ulster (Jacqueline Hill, "Art Imitating War? Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching Towards the Somme and Its Place in History", *Études irlandaises*, no. 34-1, 2009, p. 37-52, on line: <https://journals.openedition.org/etudesirlandaises/1084>).

a state visit in 2011. Volumes of the names of the dead illuminated by the artist Harry Clarke are preserved and may be visited by appointment in the bookrooms on site. An ironic twist of fate means that the renovated and splendid Gardens are not oversubscribed by visitors because of the distance from the city centre and limited free parking in the vicinity.

Conclusion

The creation and transmission of memory has touched directly on the debate regarding various monuments in several international locations: WWII monuments in Vienna, the Confederate and Christopher Columbus memorials in the United States, John A. McDonald's statue in Montreal, the Léopold II monument in Brussels, Colbert's statue in Paris and the Nubian princesses at Dublin's⁹¹ Shelbourne Hotel; a new approach to memorials and commemorations is taking shape. It remains to be seen to what extent the commemoration of WWII in Ireland has already begun to evolve or will continue to do so. Historical time is as immutable as the weather⁹², but memory is selective, and recall tends to reflect the present moment at least as much as the historical commemoration, or the context of the event. In an age of increasing collective amnesia and indifference, fake news, rapid change, multiple distractions and social networks, the examination of complex questions is not undertaken easily and leads to what President Macron calls "mixing the battles"⁹³. National history forms a block, but specialists and academics continue to ask awkward questions. Some unpopular aspects of WWII have been broached because of changing cultural perceptions in Irish society and multiperspectivity in history education, but it remains to be seen if the page has been fully turned and all the issues examined in relation to Ireland and WWII. Historians and creative artists have begun to engage with the complementary perspectives of objective reason and intuitive imagination in the depiction of the past, but it is not yet fully clear to what extent Irish public

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91. "Four Statues Removed from Outside The Shelbourne Hotel Due to 'Slavery Links'", RTÉ website, 29 July 2020, <https://www.rte.ie/news/ireland/2020/0728/1156087-statues-shelbourne>. The statues, cast by Mathurin Moreau in Paris in 1867, were removed in July 2020 from in front of The Shelbourne Hotel, Dublin because of the erroneous assumption that they represented female slaves. In December 2020 they reinstated on the grounds that in fact they represent Egyptian and Nubian princesses ("Historic Statues to Be Restored to Front of Shelbourne Hotel", RTÉ website, 24 September 2020, <https://www.rte.ie/news/dublin/2020/0924/1167307-shelbourne-statues>).
 92. Cheikh Sakho, "Bataille mémorielle: match nul à Reims", *Le Monde*, 7 August 2020, on line: https://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2020/08/07/bataille-memorielle-match-nul-a-reims_6048337_3232.html.
 93. "Confondre les combats" ("Coronavirus: à Bormes-les-Mimosas, Macron appelle les Français à l'unité et la fraternité", *Le Figaro*, 17 August 2020, en ligne: <https://www.lefigaro.fr/politique/face-aux-crisis-macron-appelle-les-francais-a-l-unite-et-la-fraternite-20200817>).

opinion North and South wishes, needs to, or is ready to reassess the invisible and the impossible dimensions of memory regarding an international war with which there was relatively little contemporary military engagement on Irish soil, which reinforced for a time anti-British feeling in parts of Ireland and which, notwithstanding the Good Friday Agreement, has left a profound impression on the national consciousness.

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