

Papers of Friedhelm Krüll (Operation Shamrock)

P337



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CONTENTS

CONTEXT

Biographical History	iv
Archival History	v

CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

Scope and Content	v
System of Arrangement	vi

CONDITIONS OF ACCESS AND USE

Access	vii
Language	vii
Finding Aid	vii

DESCRIPTION CONTROL

Archivist's Note	vii
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ALLIED MATERIALS	vii
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CONTEXT

Biographical history

Friedhelm Krüll was born Friedhelm Düllberg in Düsseldorf, Germany on 22 February 1940. His mother Anna had sixteen children in total, of which he was fourteenth. With home conditions immediately after the war being extremely poor and difficult, a place was offered for Friedhelm to take part in Operation Shamrock.

Operation Shamrock was a scheme to bring refugee children from Germany and other European countries to Ireland in the aftermath of the Second World, for a planned duration of three years' stay. Administered in the main by the Irish Red Cross, children were brought to Ireland via St Kevin's Hostel in Glencree, county Wicklow (now the location of the Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation), where they were cared for by the Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul and assessed for transmissible disease and malnutrition. The children selected were sometimes orphans, and in other cases were coming from homes where their parents were unable to care for them, for a variety of reasons. Between January 1946 and June 1947, over four hundred children arrived in Ireland by means of Operation Shamrock, almost all from Germany.

Friedhelm arrived in Ireland in September 1946, having travelled via Holyhead. After staying in Glencree, in January 1947 he went to stay with the Cotter family of Clarinbridge, county Galway. William (Billy) and Olive Cotter had three children of their own at the time: Michael, Sheila and Jacqueline. The family, including Friedhelm, later moved to Rathfarnham in Dublin.

When the initial three years came to an end, enquiries were made in Germany and it was felt that Anna Düllberg was still struggling to cope with her large family and impoverished circumstances. The Cotters wished to keep Friedhelm for a longer period, and he ultimately stayed with his Irish family for nine years.

Friedhelm worked in construction in his later life back in Germany. He and his wife Gisela have a son, Oliver, named after his foster mother Olive Cotter.

Archival history

The Friedhelm Krüll Papers were deposited by Friedhelm Krüll in 2021, facilitated by the Jacqueline FitzGerald née Cotter.

CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

Scope and Content

Correspondence relating to Friedhelm's arrival in Ireland and subsequent life with the Cotters.

Short memoir written by Friedhelm Krüll about his life.

Several photographs.

Documentation relating to the Glenree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation and their reunions for Operation Shamrock host families and foster children.

System of arrangement

1	CORRESPONDENCE AND DOCUMENTATION, 1947-2021	1
2	PHOTOGRAPHS AND OTHER MATERIAL, [1930s]-2013	9

CONDITIONS OF ACCESS AND USE

Access

Available by appointment to holders of a UCDA reader's ticket. Produced for consultation in digital format.

Language

English and German.

Finding Aid

Descriptive catalogue.

DESCRIPTION CONTROL

Archivist's Note

This descriptive catalogue was prepared by Sarah Poutch in April 2022.

ALLIED MATERIALS

P105 Papers of the Belgian Refugees Committee

1. CORRESPONDENCE AND DOCUMENTATION

P337/1 22 March 2021

15pp

Memoir

A short memoir written by Friedhelm Krüll about his experiences before and during Operation Shamrock, as well as his subsequent life. Originally written in German, this file includes a translation of Friedhelm's account by Dr Leesa Wheatley. Also includes a short covering note from Friedhelm to Jacqueline FitzGerald entrusting this account and his documents to her.

P337/2 13 January 1947

1p

Letter from Irish Red Cross Society

A letter from Mary B. Murphy, Secretary of the Children Committee of the Irish Red Cross, to William Cotter informing of the arrangements to collect Friedhelm (then Friedhelm Düllberg) from the Red Cross Home in Glenree, county Wicklow. The letter gives basic details of Friedhelm's background and mentions that he is inoculated against diphtheria.

P337/3 January 1947

1p

Information sheet

Information provided to the Cotters by the Irish Red Cross about Friedhelm, including his mother's name and address, his date of birth, religion and health condition. Signed by Mary B. Murphy.

P337/4 20 January 1947

1p

Letter from Irish Red Cross Society

A short letter from Mary B. Murphy enclosing a ration book for Friedhelm (not included).

P337/5 21 April 1947

6pp

Letter from Anna Düllberg

Letter from Friedhelm's mother to the Cotter family and to Friedhelm.

P337/6 3 June 1947

2pp

Letter from Anna Düllberg

A short note from Friedhelm's mother to the Cotters. The note is in German but a translation is included here. The original envelope is also included.

P337/7 3 July 1947

1p

Letter from Irish Department of Agriculture

Letter from Seán Ó Broin to Olive Cotter advising her on the correct way to apply for licences to export tinned beans and coffee.

P337/8 18 July 1947

4pp

Letter from Anna Düllberg

Letter from Friedhelm's mother to the Cotter family. The letter is in German but a translation is included here.

P337/9 13 January 1948

2pp

Letter from Anna Düllberg

Letter from Friedhelm's mother to the Cotter family and to Friedhelm. The letter is in German but a translation is included here.

P337/10 1948

3p

Correspondence between Bernhard Düllberg and Olive Cotter

Letter from Friedhelm's older brother to Olive Cotter asking after Friedhelm and informing her that his father recently died. Both the original in German and a translation of same are included. Also includes a copy of Mrs Cotter's reply to Bernhard giving updates on Friedhelm's wellbeing and life in Ireland.

P337/11 [March] 1948

2pp

Export licence

A licence granted to Olive Cotter to send clothing to the Düllberg family in Germany. Includes a handwritten list of clothing.

P337/12 24 March 1949

1p

Letter from Irish Red Cross Society

Letter from Mary B. Murphy of the Society confirming that Friedhelm's mother is amenable to the Cotters keeping him in Ireland for 'another few years', as requested.

P337/13 26 May 1949

1p

Letter from Irish Red Cross Society

Letter from Mary B. Murphy of the Society replying to Olive Cotter's request for information on the living conditions of Friedhelm's family in Germany and the possibility of his mother not being willing to receive him back after a further three years in Ireland.

P337/14 1 June 1949

1p

Letter from Irish Red Cross Society

Letter from Mary B. Murphy of the Society replying to Olive Cotter's request for the address of the German Social Ministry in Düsseldorf, as she wanted to get information about the question of his return at

P337/14
contd

the end of a further three years.

P337/15

2 July 1949

1p

Letter from Irish Red Cross Society

Letter from Mary B. Murphy of the Society acknowledging receipt of permission received by the Cotters for Friedhelm to remain in Ireland for a further period.

P337/16

11 October 1949

1p

Letter from Irish Red Cross Society

Letter from the County Director of the Society informing Olive Cotter that the German Social Ministry in Düsseldorf have written to say that the Health Office will contact Friedhelm's mother and ask that she write at regular intervals.

P337/17

4 November 1949

1p

Letter from Irish Red Cross Society

Letter from Mary B. Murphy of the Society enclosing a Certificate of Thanks from the Chairman of the Irish Red Cross Society. The certificate is included.

P337/18

10 October 1950

3 items

Letter from Molly Newman

Letter to Olive Cotter from her friend Molly in Belfast, who has been making enquiries in Düsseldorf after Friedhelm's family. Enclosed are replies from Maria, Molly's friend who teaches at Lüneberg, and from Dr Dorothy Broome, a Women's Affairs Officer in Düsseldorf. Maria's letter suggests Mrs Cotter contact Oberschwester Anna Adams (nursing officer) to visit Frau Düllberg.

P337/19 [November] 1950

4pp

Letter from Anna Adams

Letter from Anna Adams as mentioned in the preceding item, giving the Cotters details on the Düllberg family members and on the circumstances in the home. She mentions that while Frau Düllberg fears that Friedhelm will become estranged from her, she is suffering from ill health as well as straitened financial circumstances and is grateful to have him stay with the Cotters in Ireland for a longer period. The letter is in German but a handwritten translation is included.

P337/20 7 November–11 December 1950

5pp

Letter from the German Red Cross

Letter to Molly Newman from Trude Lowenbach of the German Red Cross after Dr Dorothy Broome made enquiries on her behalf. They visited Frau Düllberg and advise that he stay with the Cotters due to the conditions in the home. Includes a covering letter from Molly Newman to Olive Cotter enclosing the above (11 December, 2pp).

P337/21 25 November 1950

3pp

Letter from Anna Düllberg

Letter from Friedhelm's mother to Olive Cotter, asking her not to be angry that she has not written in so long. She asks about her son's schooling and temperament and sends him her love. The letter is in German but a handwritten translation is included here.

P337/22 11 October 1951

4pp

Letter from Elfride Lassen

Letter from a German social worker on behalf of and regarding Friedhelm's mother, Anna. She details the home circumstances of the Düllbergs and asks for information and updates on Friedhelm for his mother so that their relationship should 'not be completely broken'. Also includes a covering note from J.G. O'Connor who had the original letter translated for Olive Cotter.

P337/23 13 July 1989

1p

Letter from the office of Richard von Weizsäcker

A response to a letter from Friedhelm asking that the German President extend congratulations to the Cotters on their golden wedding anniversary. In German.

P337/24 8 August 1989

1p

Letter from Richard von Weizsäcker

Letter of congratulations from the German President to the Cotters on their golden wedding anniversary.

P337/25 [February] 1997

2pp

Invitation

Invitation for Friedhelm and Gisela Krüll to a reception to commemorate 'Operation Shamrock' in Dublin Castle on 23 March 1997. In German and English.

P337/26 [February] 1997

1p

Invitation

Invitation for Friedhelm and Gisela Krüll to a reception on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of 'Operation Shamrock' at Iveagh House in Dublin on 24 March 1997.

P337/27 11 February 1997

1p

Letter from the Irish Red Cross

Letter from Martin Good, Secretary General, to the Cotters advising them of commemorative events planned for the anniversary of Operation Shamrock.

P337/28 13 March 1997

1p

Letter from the Irish Red Cross

Letter from Martin Good, Secretary General, to the Cotters sending the latest information on the commemoration of Operation Shamrock.

P337/29 2 September 1997

1p

Letter from Henrik Heckmann

Letter to William and Olive Cotter which mentions a planned film about Operation Shamrock.

P337/30 14 June 2001

1p

Letter from the Irish Red Cross

Letter to the Cotters from Brian Caden, Communications Assistant, regarding a documentary being made by Anna Schmidt on Operation Shamrock.

P337/31 9 September 2013

2pp

Letter from the Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation

Letter to Friedhelm inviting him and his family to the 'Operation Shamrock Gathering' on 5 October 2013 at the Centre in Wicklow, Ireland.

2. PHOTOGRAPHS AND OTHER MATERIAL

- P337/32** [1930s]
1p
Black and white photograph
Mounted photograph of William Cotter in graduation robes. The photographer is Lafayette (15.5x19.5cm).
- P337/33** [1949]
1p
Black and white photograph
Friedhelm photographed with his three foster siblings, from the Cotter family (11.5x18cm).
- P337/34** [1951]
1p
Black and white photograph
The Cotter family photographed with Friedhelm (8.5x6cm).
- P337/35** 2010
1p
Colour photograph
Colour photograph of Friedhelm Krüll.
- P337/36** 22 February 1940
1p
Baptismal certificate
Photocopy of Friedhelm's baptismal certificate.

Papers of Friedhelm Krüll (Operation Shamrock)

P337/37

[1947]

1p

Luggage tag

Tag bearing Friedhelm's name and addressed to 'Mr Cotter Oranmore Co. Galway'.

P337/38

1976–2013

4 items

Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation

Small file of items relating to the Centre, including a Glencree Peace Bond (16 September 1976, 1p).

P337/39

1946–96

18pp

Newspaper cuttings

Newspaper cuttings and photocopies collected by William Cotter relating to Operation Shamrock.