

'Where is War Poetry?'

by Nerys Williams

A lecture commissioned and delivered at Holy Glimmers of Goodbyes, a day of reflection on the poetry of war and peace in Wales, organised by Literature Wales with support from the Welsh Government's Cymru'n Cofio Wales Remembers 1914-1918 First World War Centenary Programme.

How do we locate war poetry? Where exactly does war poetry 'live' and where can one find it? In attempting to answer these questions we might want to consider war poetry's relationship to ideas of 'home'; how war poetry offers a reimagining of what home might be. Perhaps, a more fundamental question might be how does war impact on our everyday landscape and how does that change our perception of home? In attempting to address these aspects of war poetry, with a particular attention on the work of Welsh poets, I will map the shift from 'soldier' or WW1 poetry to more recent war poetry, associated with conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

But to begin, I want to begin to offer a perspective on that more intractable question, where might war be found, and its impact on our everyday landscape, by turning to visual art from West Wales. Osi Rhys Osmond's late paintings offer a complex negotiating of how ideas of home are inscribed by war. A series entitled *Hawk and Helicopter* show us how the aerial space of Carmarthen Bay is inhabited by Chinook helicopters. In Osmond's paintings hawks and sea birds share the sky with military hardware. The catalogue for the original exhibition at Swansea's *Mission Gallery*, describes the series of paintings as 'an account by drawing, painting and text of the artist's experiences, thoughts and observations' which was created 'while watching and painting the sunset from a high point facing south west, overlooking Carmarthen Bay.' The exhibition notes remind us that the Bay is 'designated as a Special Area of Conservation, as well as housing a military testing ground on its estuary edge.'¹

One of the most startling of the series is Osmond's 'Chinook' painting. This work depicts a low-lying sun and a seascape which is overwhelmed by a graphic rendition

of a precariously tilted military helicopter. The helicopter's flight pattern is placed in parallel with a seabird's. Following Osmond's death the painting was presented as a gift from the people of Wales, to the Flemish Parliament at the Senedd Cardiff, on November 16th 2017. In his notes for the original exhibition, Osmond evocatively described the processes of mediating a landscape that is intruded upon by the activity of the MOD operations from Pendine and Aberporth. Capturing the wildlife of Carmarthen Bay on canvas required intense observation. Periods of meditation were routinely disrupted by the military test runs in the sky:

Vast flocks of wading birds, migrants and residents congregate, roost, feed, preen, hunt and breed. Foxes prowl shorelines and rabbits tumble in cliff top warrens. Mad hares strut high fields. Cormorants guano their red roosting rocks a rancid pink. Ravens clank and tumble, blackly. The rivers pour down as the moon drawn tide ebbs and flows. This is the normality of the place. Occasionally, this is disturbed by unexpected sights and strange sounds, for here hawks hunt and sometimes helicopters hover; peregrine falcons and Chinooks appear and disappear, fly, rise, descend, hunt, patrol, attack and retreat. The sudden raucous voice of the Chinook bruises the sky, assaults hearing, the blade's violent clatter shatters the clear estuarine light.²

War poetry has always offered a complex perspective on how war intersects with ideas of home, as well as the relationship of travel and mobility to ideas of belonging. However, I will argue that the superimposition of war *upon* the landscape of home becomes increasingly more apparent in recent poetry of 21st Century Wales and America.

GWILYM WILLIAMS (PENYBONT, CARMARTHENSHIRE) WW1 Commemorating a war poet in the Everyday

Firstly, let me take you to an unremarkable scene in a small village in West Wales. A commemorative black stone cross sits on the brow of the hill, near a chapel in a small village in Carmarthenshire. The scene is replicated in hundreds of other villages in Wales. This memorial in the village of Pen-y-Bont near Trelech, is fenced off and accessible only through a small latch gate. Children after Sunday school would dare each other to walk around it, braving the sheer drop. The cross commemorates the loss of three local men in WW1: Pte David Harries, Pte David Davies and 2nd Lieut Gwilym Williams. Williams was from the local farm Nant-yr-Afr, a graduate of the Department

of Welsh, Aberystwyth and a promising poet. He won numerous eisteddfodic chairs, including the Chair of the University Eisteddfod in 1912, his winning ode was entitled 'Gwanwyn Bywyd' ('Springtime of Life').

After graduation, Williams taught at Newtown and Walsall near Birmingham. In July 1915 he joined the army and was made a lieutenant in the 17th Battalion of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers. In May 1916 Gwilym was in Fauquissart. He was injured by a bullet on 20th May and died the following day in the hospital at Merville. Williams was buried at Merville Cemetery 22nd May 1916. He was twenty six years old.

Not unlike Hedd Wyn (Ellis Evans), following Williams's death his poetry was collected and published in a volume, edited by his brother John Williams. This overlooked volume *Dan Yr Helyg / Under the Willows* (1917) contains *englynion*, lyrics and longer work or *prydeist* as well as essays.³ A long, and sadly, unfinished work by Williams, *Gwladgawrch (Patriotism)* finds correspondence between Belgium and Wales. The poet in the excerpts below presents a relationship between Belgium's battle for survival and freedom and Wales's dream of political self-determination. The space of home and battlefield are in close dialogue with one another:

Gwell nag anrheg aur y treisiwr
Ydoedd rhyddid ganddi hi,
Dyna bechod Belgium fechan,
Dyna'i bythol fri.

Mae cynhaeaf arall weithion,
Ar dy feysydd Belgium brudd,
A pheiriannau Mawrth yn rhuo—
'N lladd bob nos, bob dydd

Gwell nag anrheg ydoedd rhyddid
gan ei dewrion gwladgar hi.
Dyna cododd gwrando Cymru
I anfarwol fri.

Better than a violator's bribe
is Belgium's idea of the free.
Through her resistance
valour and honour we see.

There's another harvest moving
Belgium fields, a broken might,
war machines are roaring
killing day and night.

Better than treasure was freedom
of her patriots countrywide
Wales listened with attention
honouring Belgium's pride.

(Trans. N W)

In Williams's poetry there is a distinct sense of a longing for *y filltir sgwar*, the local community and landscape is presented as a space of solace in his poetry. The world war is outside this idealised space, remote even. Williams was influenced by the Romantics and in particular the nature poetry of Wordsworth. The poetry of *Under the Willows* configures an unviolated Welsh landscape, a space of retreat and healing. In an essay- talk included in the volume '*Natur Fel Cyfrwng Diwylliant*' ('Nature as a form of Culture') Williams emphasises how the living world offers not only a mental haven, but a mentorship in humility, wisdom and altruism. Here is a translated extract from 'Nature as a Form of Culture':

Nature teaches us not only knowledge but wisdom. While pride is associated with the attainment of knowledge, the key trait of wisdom is humility. Humanity need both to be safe and strong... If one searches for a range and intensity of the soul, if one desires to grow in empathy, self-sacrifice, if one seeks for humanity a sense of depth and inclusiveness, one must take Nature as an instructor. (Trans. NW)

HEDD WYN (Ellis Evans): Poetry and Community

Hedd Wyn (Ellis Evans) is often seen as pastoral poet, one has only to think of the entitling of his memorial volume *Cerddi'r Bugail* (*The Shepherd's Lyrics*, 1918). Evans grew up with poetry as serving a communal function, not only in local and national eisteddfodau and religious culture, but he also he commemorated many birthdays and weddings. As the war asserted itself, he found himself writing elegies by request for the families in Trawsfynydd and the surrounding area. These poems also offered gestures of empathy and mourning. Formally the poems would often be englynion, a four-lined

cynganedd measured verse. In these slight and metrically intricate poems we find Evans trying to negotiate a bardic tradition with a very modern war.

I would also argue that he is knowingly using the traditions of Welsh culture to interrogate a 'new' tradition of modern militarism. We can sense a growing, if encrypted weariness in these works. As a poet he was in difficult position, having to offer elegies which somehow offered some solace to the families that their blood sacrifice had not been in vain.

One of his most well-known elegies 'Marw Oddi Cartref' / 'Dying Far from Home' was for Corporal Robert Hughes, Fronwynion, Trawsfynydd. Hughes did not die on the field, but in Alesbury camp, he had married a couple of weeks earlier. This poem was in fact a newspaper poem published on January 29th 1916 in the *Rhedegydd*. In this poem we can see Evans's anger at the ceaseless and incomprehensible loss of life, the displacement of Welsh soldier, uprooted from a nurturing community and the loss of hope. The poem reflects on the industrialisation of death through a mass killing machine. Importantly it also issues its own challenge to any ambition of monumentality. In this vein one might think of Siegfried Sassoon's own riposte to commemorative memorialisation in the poem 'On Passing the New Menin Gate' ('this sepulchre of crime'). Evans equally seeks no grandiose edifices, instead he suggests that nature should command and reclaim the graves of the dead.

Marw Oddi Cartref (excerpted)

Mae beddrod ei fam yn Nhrawsfynydd,
Cynefin y gwynt a'r glaw,
Ac yntau ynghwsg ar obennydd
Ym mynwent yr estron draw.

* * * *

Bu farw a'r byd yn ei drafferth
Yng nghanol y rhyfel mawr:
Bu farw mor ifanc a phrydferth
A chwmwl yn nwylo'r wawr.

Ni ddaw gyda'r hafau melynion
Byth mwy i'w ardal am dro;
Cans mynwent sy'n nhiroedd yr estron

Ac yntau ynghwsg yn ei gro.

Ac weithian yn erw y marw
Caed yntau huno mewn hedd;
Boed adain y nef dros ei weddw,
A dail a rhos dros ei fedd

Dying Far From Home

*Trawsfynydd, his mother's burial ground
Home of wind and rain.*

*He is asleep- a pillow – a mound
A graveyard of unknown terrain.*

* * * *

*The maelstrom world- in it he died
buried in the Great War.
Dying so young, and wide eyed,
a cloud held in dawn's early tor.*

*No more summer's bright band
No more walking's digression –
Only this grave, in unfamiliar land*

Body curled in earth's rotation

*And somehow in this dead acre
Let him find a form of peace.
His widow shielded – Heaven's maker
Heath and leaves cover his grave's lease.*

Trans. Nerys Williams

Francis Ledwidge The Spaces of Commemoration (from Pastoral Poet to War Poet)

In Ireland, Ellis Evans is known as the poet who was killed on the same day as Francis Ledwidge (whereas the reverse is of course true in Wales). Both poets died on the same day on 31st July in Flanders in 1917 a few hundred yards from one another. Ledwidge served in three theatres of war Gallipoli, Macedonia and Flanders/Western front. His first volume, *Songs of the Fields* (1915) was a pastoral hymn to his hometown Slane, in the Boyne Valley and is an exploration of love and nature. This first volume also includes a cycle of poems that owed their existence to Irish mythology. Like Hedd Wyn there is a keen sense of the botanist's eye in his poetry and a rooted sense of belonging, class and community.

Ledwidge did not often deviate from the pastoral. Hence the reference to him as 'the poet of the Blackbirds', a name derived from some of his most famous early poems 'Behind the Closed Eye' and 'The Blackbird'. Even his love and war poetry contain significant elements of landscape and the bucolic. His two posthumous volumes, *Songs of Peace* (1917) and *Last Songs* (1918) were edited by Lord Dunsany, his patron. In these volumes he did address more directly elements of warfare. His subject matter was often, albeit obliquely, reflections on a global war.

One of Ledwidge's most famous late poems 'Soliloquy' went through conservative editing for its posthumous publication. In effect this war poem was gelded by its editor. The removal of the poem's final line changed the context and politics of the poem, as well as the reputation of the poet. Thankfully, the final acidic line (placed in italics

below) has been reinstated recently and inscribed in the monument to Ledwidge in Artillery Wood, Ypres. Its re-inclusion grants the poem and poet's voice a fierce agency:

And now I'm drinking wine in France,
The helpless child of circumstance.
To-morrow will be loud with war,
How will I be accounted for?
It is too late now to retrieve
A fallen dream, too late to grieve
A name unmade, but not too late
To thank the gods for what is great;
A keen-edged sword, a soldier's heart,
Is greater than a poet's art.
And greater than a poet's fame
A little grave that has no name.

Whence honour turns away in shame

Geographic Complexity/ Temporal Complexity - Where is Welsh War Poetry in 21st Century?

Where indeed might war poetry be found in the 21st Century? Political devolution in Wales, and its concomitant ambition of presenting a unifying identity, becomes fraught and complex once one considers Wales's relationship to the British Army. It should be noted that the process of devolution for Wales has been simultaneously framed by extensive British military expeditions in both Iraq (2003–11) and Afghanistan (2001–14). Moreover, the extent of Welsh participation in and recruitment to the British armed forces has, in terms of the wider UK, been disproportionate: in 2006, Rhondda MP Chris Bryant pointed out that although Wales made up 6 per cent of the population of the UK, it produced 9 per cent of the armed forces.⁴

The absence of any evidently accessible first-hand Welsh veterans' poetry is notable. It could be argued that for the contemporary Welsh veteran, surrounded by social media and its premise of immediacy (and a responsive audience), the writing of such 'soldier poetry' may well be a cultural anachronism, notwithstanding the complexity of finding

the necessary support structures on returning 'home'. In the US, however, the prevalence of professionalized writing groups for veterans is evident.⁵ There do exist, of course, veterans' contributions to multi-authored anthologies such as the one published in 2011 to support the charity Combat Stress, *Enduring Freedom: An Afghan Anthology*, which commemorates operations in Afghanistan between 2001 and 2011 – but it is notable that voices of contemporary Welsh veterans are not explicitly identifiable in this particular volume.⁶

Here I turn to the work of Wales's most visible civilian war poets, Owen Sheers and Robert Minhinnick. Sheers through veteran interviews attempts to document the return home from war, while Minhinnick offers multiple perspectives on the landscape of Wales viewed through the legacy of two Iraq Wars.⁷

Owen Sheers and Veteran Voice

Owen Sheers's documentation of war experience must initially be read in tandem with the difficulty or visibility of finding Welsh veterans' voices in the public realm. Sheers has worked with the testimonies and memories of British veterans in his play (created and acted by wounded soldiers) *The Two Worlds of Charlie F.* (2012).⁸

The idea of a transition to home, a return journey which is a central pivot of most veteran literature of the 20th Century in 21st Century writing, becomes more pressurised in this work. In *The Two Worlds of Charlie F.* the key protagonist Charlie, comments on the physical and mental dislocation and disorientation that occurs following medical care in transit and the rapid return journey to the UK. He compares the experience of the twenty-first-century soldier to that of the wounded and traumatized veterans of earlier wars:

When British soldiers were wounded in the Napoleonic wars it took them months to get home, if they did. In World War One a fortnight at least. World War Two, about the same from France, much longer from India, Egypt, Burma.

Now? Medevaced from Nad Ali north to Bastion in twenty minutes, back in the UK in twelve, thirteen hours tops. But in here –

He taps his head.

Even quicker than that. Pretty much insta-fucking-taneous. Blink-of-an-eye kinda stuff. With a few weeks' high-definition hallucinations thrown in for free.

Sheers has mentioned in interview that the later poetry volume *Pink Mist* (2013) arose from a sense that 'I still felt I had many untold stories to tell'.⁹ As such, it is clear that Sheers presents his work as a documentation and voicing of veteran experience.¹⁰ This work offers perspectives upon the impact of the Afghanistan War on veterans and their families. *Pink Mist*, uses the topography of Bristol to explore the experiences of three Afghanistan War veterans: Hads, Taff and Arthur. Their 'return' re-inscribes experiences of trauma: Hads is a double amputee and Taff is a bomb blast survivor, and both, we learn, are suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

As the poetic text advances, we also find out that Arthur, who acts as an omniscient narrator, has taken his own life. Most specifically, however, *Pink Mist* is a volume that is focused on the processes of rehabilitation as opposed to military action itself. Thus, Captain Ed Poynter, C Company 2 Rifles, is quoted in the introductory matter to the book itself as saying that the volume 'captures the reality of what it's like to adjust to "normality" when one comes home from war'.

Geographically, ideas of 'home' are initially presented as Bristol; numerous references to Bristol's street culture are made, such as evocations of artist Banksy's ominous reaper on the side of The Thekla floating nightclub. There is also the inclusion of dub step and trip-hop artists associated with the city (such as Portishead, Tricky and Massive Attack). Although set in Bristol, the text also includes references to Wales, the most obvious being a character named Taff and the citing of the River Severn as a geographical border. Moreover, Sheers is keen to situate his work as part of a lineage of writers with a distinct connection to Wales and war poetry. He states that he wanted 'to write into a British tradition of conflict poetry – from *Y Gododdin*, through Wilfred Owen and, perhaps most significantly, David Jones.'¹¹

The archive left for soldier widows to curate in *Pink Mist* is an ephemeral one. The most tangible documents left by Arthur are 'videos on my phone, / [...] the messages I still can't delete.' The curation of a person's memory is a fragile thing, but Sheers offers us a contemporaneous form of documenting the lives of the dead. Thus, the opening of *Pink Mist* curiously rewinds a process of growth through social media –as Arthur one of the soldiers invites us to:

Friend us on Facebook and you'll soon see
how quick our profile shots scroll back
from battledress to uniform,
from webbing to sports bag,
from ration pack to lunch box
from out there to back here.

ROBERT MINHINNICK AND IRAQ WAR(S)

Robert Minhinnick has earlier investigated the use of depleted uranium for arms manufacture against Iraq in the 1990–1 Gulf War, as well as researching Gulf War veterans' experiences of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.¹² Moreover, Minhinnick's volume of prose *To Babel and Back* (2005) includes essays that document time spent in Iraq following the Gulf War.

In 'The poem *An Isotope, Dreaming*', also from *King Driftwood* (2008),¹³ the poet weaves together the language of science with meditations about his hometown (Porthcawl), as well as narratives highlighting the human cost of war in Iraq. Nuclear waste and its radioactivity become both a benign and malign vehicle in the poem to illustrate the dissemination of ideas, the birth of languages, acts of mobility and spirituality, as well as entropy and destruction. 'An Isotope, Dreaming' begins in south Wales, but the radioactive isotope moves beyond the 'iron womb of Sellafield', the 'cubist monument of Trawsfynydd' and the 'accelerator tunnel at Berkeley', to make three journeys. The first of these is to an undisclosed 'nameless place' where the 'geiger talk / like a black habanero rattling with seeds'; the second is to Iraq's Basra and the ancient city-states of Nineveh and Babylon; while the third visits Belarus and the legacy of Chernobyl.

Minhinnick is also looking for connections, for a sense of linkage between communities. However, his poetry refutes a straightforward linear narrative or chronicle of different conflicts. There is also an element of synchronicity in the poem as past events are reinterpreted and re-encountered. Thus, the reader is faced with the Swansea Blitz of World War II from a new temporal standpoint:

Now Swansea is burning again,
its sky the stained glass in the Brangwyn Hall.

The epicentre is Green Dragon Lane,
and as the Guildhall
melts its limestone lifts
like lingerie

In short, Minhinnick's poetic works to withhold a single omniscient view of both Iraqi wars the form of the piece – with its drafted-in voices as well as stammers, visual performance, repetitive clauses and pared-down lyrics – as well as the momentum of radioactive activity. Thus, the poet acts as voyager.

Minhinnick's poetry establishes a dynamic relationship between the local and the global. However, Home in Minhinnick's work *King Driftwood* often signals acute strangeness, where the everyday becomes menacing such as in 'St John's Sunflowers'. The sunflowers in this poem are presented as ethical witnesses; they are the inherently 'good' of the democratic polis operating beyond the hierarchies of power. Yet, in observing the sunflowers in his Porthcawl allotment, the poet shows how the machinery of war invades the individual consciousness. The sunflowers are described in militaristic terms: 'Safe in their silos' where 'No warhead gleamed so brightly'. Indeed, Minhinnick creates a defamiliarized world where even the benign sunflowers are presented in toxic terms: 'In Babylon the sunflowers / are yellow as uranium'.

As the poem proceeds, Iraq coexists with the Welsh landscape and the sunflowers become more than a visible beacon in an allotment, since they are the incubators of written language as they 'ferment the words / themselves'. This positing of the sunflower as source of all language (and consequently, one assumes, knowledge too), only generates violence from the angry masses:

They cut open the St John's sunflowers
and saw there was nothing to be done.
But the crowd demands the heads, the hearts,
as the crowd demands the medicines and the missiles
that will make us brave.

In this moment, the poem brutally evokes the hostage beheading videos that have haunted the web and other media since the execution of *Wall Street Journal* reporter Daniel Pearl went viral in 2002. Minhinnick foregrounds the contradictory impulses of two seemingly antithetical crowds: one desires absolute submission, 'the heads, the hearts', whereas the other seeks retribution and human aid. Sardonicly, the poem comments that it is only through *funded* diplomacy ('the medicines and the missiles') that Western powers are made brave. At the close of 'St John's Sunflowers', then, Minhinnick reasserts the complexity of living in a devolved Wales at war in Afghanistan and Iraq. We are left with an impression of blood sacrifice, as the sunflower stalks are laid in the ambiguous, and potentially threatening, space 'of dark and glittering things / that we call home'.

CONCLUSION: Juliana Spahr and Ecosystems of War

On reflection, I have attempted to show how might locate war poetry, its relationship to ideas of home and how these characteristics change from WW1 to contemporary war poetry. Finally, we need to reflect on that fundamental question - where is war and how does war impact on the everyday?

I am concluding with a remarkable female civilian voice; the American poet Juliana Spahr and her volume *this connection of everyone with lungs* (2005). The volume consists of two extended poems both written in response to the 9-11 attacks and the subsequent Iraq War. The first poem is simply entitled 'poem written after september 11, 2001' and the second 'poem written from november 30, 2002 to March 27, 2003'. The poems are intimate and epistolary addressing two lovers or what she calls 'beloveds'. Spahr intersperses factual information with lyric appeals and private mediation. In the volume there are encounters between very different forms of information, from comments on climate change and data on the Iraq war, to information about the celebrity sightings of Winona Ryder, Fat Boy Slim, Zoë Ball, David Letterman and Roman Polanski.

Written initially as response to the US government's intervention in Iraq Spahr's 'poem written from november 30, 2002 to March 27, 2003' delineates an overwhelming

pressure to give form to information regarding the war. Spahr was based in Hawaii at the time and the interconnected sections are all dated individually. Flora and fauna and the landscape of Hawaii are depicted in the midst of thinking about war. Spahr comments in her notes for *this connection of everyone with lungs*:

I felt that I had to think about what I was connected with, and what I was complicit with, as I lived off the fat of the military-industrial complex on a small island. I had to think about my intimacy with things I would rather not be intimate with even as (because?) I was very far away from all those things geographically.

Spahr is looking not only for connectives that bind communities together, but to show how the machinery of war appropriates the environment. Her speaker illustrates how Hawaii's status as a military base redefines the ecology of the island:

And because the planes flew overhead when we spoke of the cries
of birds our every word was an awkward squawk that meant also
AH-64 Apache attack helicopter, UH-60 Black Hawk troop helicopter.

Here we might pause to reflect on the simultaneous inhabiting of weapons and landscape in our own country. Indeed, my impossibly general question 'Where is war poetry?' cannot be given a simple, clean answer. We are reminded that in Hedd Wyn's Trawsfynydd, there was Bronaber army camp which incorporated an Artillery Range. The practice range generated the indignation of the community when a local chapel 'Penystryd' was damaged by the force of the guns on 31st July in 1914.

And maybe looking to the landscape of a West Wales childhood, I am aware of the signage of war in many of these spaces. The private company *QinetiQ* now runs the ammunitions testing for the MOD in Pendine Sands, near the beach where children continue to build sandcastles and J.G. Parry-Thomas once broke the world land speed record.¹⁴ *QinetiQ* boasts that Pendine Sands is home to 'a 1500 metre long test track'¹⁵ the beach is littered with signage warning the public: 'RISK OF EXPLOSION- UNUSUAL OBJECTS FOUND ON THE BEACH MUST NOT BE TOUCHED'.

Mirroring the sentiment of Osmond's destabilising images of West Wales landscapes in *Hawk and Helicopter*, we must admit to a disturbing circularity in reading these signs. What is evoked by these commands on Pendine Beach is the fraught intersection of

military hardware and civilian leisure, the MOD landscape and its oppressive militarism. The role of any contemporary non-combatant poet, is to interrogate the complex intersection between landscapes of home and industries of war, and how these spaces are forced to coexist.

Nerys Williams, February 2019

¹ See Mission Gallery website <https://www.missiongallery.co.uk/exhibitions/hawk-and-helicopter/>

² Osi Rhys Osmond <https://www.missiongallery.co.uk/exhibitions/hawk-and-helicopter/>

³The volume is not digitised and can be accessed here <https://cymru1914.org/en/view/manuscripts/3698716/6>

⁴ See the statement by Chris Bryant in response to Q63 in: House of Commons Welsh Affairs Committee, *Future of RAF St Athan*, Fourth Report of Session 2005–06 (London: House of Commons), Ev. 19,

<<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmselect/cmwelaf/1129/1129.pdf>>, accessed 15 April 2019.

<<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmselect/cmwelaf/1129/1129.pdf>>, accessed 17 December 2015.

⁵ Here one has only to consider the portfolio and work of such US groups as: the *Veterans Writing Project*

<<http://veteranswriting.org>> accessed 15th April 2019 and *The Telling Project* <<http://thetellingproject.org>> accessed 15th April 2019.

⁶ Ryan Gearing, ed., *Enduring Freedom: An Afghan Anthology: Commemorating Operations in Afghanistan 2001–2011* (Brighton: FireStep, 2011).

⁷ For the full complexity of my search for Welsh War Veteran experience in poetry please see Nerys Williams 'After Before: Finding Welsh War Poetry' in *Devolutionary Readings: English-Language Poetry and Contemporary Wales* ed. Matt Jarvis (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2017) pp. 157-82.

Here, I also acknowledge the important work being done by Cardiff's *Re: Live Theatre* with Veterans performing their experience through dramatic performance. See in particular *Y Dychweliad/ Coming Home*

<http://www.re-live.org.uk/coming-home> Accessed 15th April 2019.

⁸ Owen Sheers, *The Two Worlds of Charlie F.* (London: Faber, 2012).

⁹ Carl Griffin, 'Poetry Interview: Owen Sheers', *Wales Arts Review*, 11 June 2013 <<http://www.walesartsreview.org/poetry-interview-owen-sheers/>> accessed 13 August 2015.

¹⁰ Sheers, *Pink Mist* (London: Faber, 2013).

¹¹ Griffin, 'Poetry Interview: Owen Sheers'.

¹² For more information on Minhinnick's research into depleted uranium see Robert Minhinnick, *To Babel and Back* (Bridgend: Seren, 2005).

¹³ Robert Minhinnick, *King Driftwood* (Manchester: Carcanet, 2008)

¹⁴ See QinetiQ's website '[Pendine's] natural features, coupled with today's infrastructure and expertise, mean that the site continues to provide a key MOD facility for test, evaluation and training support activities. The Range is divided into three geographical sections; West, Central and East. The facilities in the different areas vary considerably, but most consist of prepared, safe areas with permanent buildings and power supplies. Staff and equipment are moved between the ranges as required by the schedule of work. Pendine's Long Test Track (LTT) facility, suitable for high-speed dynamic trials, is unique in the UK'. <https://pendine.qinetiq.com/about/index.aspx>

¹⁵ Pendine is featured in QinetiQ's graduate recruitment video

<https://www.gradcracker.com/hub/137/qinetiq/videos/2134/weapons-and-land>