

Amser Rhyfel 1939–45

Yn sgîl colledion echrydus Rhyfel Byd 1914–18 ymddangosodd Mudiad Heddwch a hefyd ffurfiwyd Cynghrair y Cenedloedd er mwyn sicrhau na fyddai byth eto wrthdaro rhwng cenedloedd. Fodd bynnag, roedd yna arwyddion fod yna wrthdaro newydd a mwy pwerus rhwng buddiannau yn ymddangos, yn seiliedig ar wahaniaethau ideolegol o natur dotalitaraidd. Roedd y Chwyldro Rwsiaidd wedi hyrwyddo'r diddordeb mewn Comiwnyddiaeth, tra bo militariaeth unbenaethau'r Eidal a'r Almaen wedi annog Ffasgiaeth cenedlaethol. Daeth y ddwy garfan o hyd i gefnogwyr a gwrthwynebwyr yng Nghymru.

Yn Nhal-y-bont, ceir peth tystiolaeth o filwriaethusrwydd gwleidyddol yn y llythyr canlynol yn y *Welsh Gazette* ar Fawrth 4ydd 1920:

TAL-Y-BONT POST

Comrades of the Great War

At a meeting of the Tal-y-bont Post held at the School Saturday night, the following resolutions were passed:

That we, the Tal-y-bont Post strongly protest against the proposed increase in the price of butter and pledge ourselves not to pay more than 2/6d per lb.

Further that we hold a public meeting on Friday evening March 5th to invite the support of the inhabitants of the district and to unite and adopt every lawful method to prevent further increase in the price of butter, that we strongly condemn the remarks of Mr Bunce Morgan at the Aberystwyth Rural Council on Monday, Feb 23rd in describing the action of the Comrades of the Great War as 'causing discontent between different classes of the community'.

It was the action of the 'comrades' in days gone by, that prevented far more serious interference and discontent taking place amongst the farmers of our country.

The Comrades now feel they have the right to voice their opinion in a matter that concerns their very existence.

Yn gyffredinol, gellir synhwyro awyrgylch o bryder cynyddol ar ddechrau 1939 wrth i'r setiau 'wireless' gymharol

Wartime 1939–45

Following the huge casualties of the 1914–18 World War a Peace Movement emerged and the League of Nations was formed to ensure that conflict between nations would never occur again. However, there were signs that a new, more powerful conflict of interests was developing, based on ideological differences of a totalitarian nature. The Russian Revolution had boosted the interest in Communism, whilst the militarism of Italian and German dictatorships had encouraged the emergence of national Fascism. Both factions found supporters and opponents in Wales.

In Tal-y-bont, there is some evidence of political militancy in the following letter in the *Welsh Gazette* of 4th March 1920:

TAL-Y-BONT POST

Comrades of the Great War

At a meeting of the Tal-y-bont Post held at the School Saturday night, the following resolutions were passed:

That we, the Tal-y-bont Post strongly protest against the proposed increase in the price of butter and pledge ourselves not to pay more than 2/6d per lb.

Further that we hold a public meeting on Friday evening March 5th to invite the support of the inhabitants of the district and to unite and adopt every lawful method to prevent further increase in the price of butter, that we strongly condemn the remarks of Mr Bunce Morgan at the Aberystwyth Rural Council on Monday, Feb 23rd in describing the action of the Comrades of the Great War as 'causing discontent between different classes of the community'.

It was the action of the 'comrades' in days gone by, that prevented far more serious interference and discontent taking place amongst the farmers of our country.

The Comrades now feel they have the right to voice their opinion in a matter that concerns their very existence.

Generally, one can discern an atmosphere of growing apprehension at the beginning of 1939 as the relatively new 'wireless' sets informed people of day to day events. Invasions, annexations, nationalist

newydd hysbysu pobl ynglŷn â digwyddiadau yn ddyddiol. Edrychwyd ar oresgyniadau, cyfeddiannau ac ymholiadau o genedlaetholdeb gydag arswyd a braw.

Roedd arwyddion o baratoi mor gynnar â mis Ionawr 1939. Ffurfiwyd yr ARP (Amddiffyn rhag Cyrchoedd Awyr) a'r AFS (Gwasanaeth Tân Cynorthwyol), tra yng Ngheredigion roedd y Cyngor Sir yn anghytuno ynglŷn â lle i storio mygydau nwy a phwy oedd i dalu amdanynt, gydag un Cynghorydd yn dweud 'bydd y bomwyr yma o'u blaen'. Fis yn ddiweddarach roedd llythyr i Sefydliad y Merched yn gofyn am wirfoddolwyr i ganfasio plwyf Ceulanamaesmawr ar gyfer llety i ffoaduriaid pe digwyddai rhyfel. Cododd problem hefyd ynglŷn â dosbarthu ffoaduriaid ac a ddylai pobl gael tâl am eu lletya.

Roedd penderfyniad y Llywodraeth i ddyblu'r Fyddin Dirioagaethol drwy recriwtio 380,000 o ddynion ychwanegol yn peri mwy o ofid ar gyfer y dyfodol. Dechreuodd Pwyllgor Recriwtio yr Arglwydd Raglaw ymgyrch ym mis Ebrill 1939, gyda chymorth gŵr lleol a dderbyniodd yr enwog Groes Fictoria (Brigadydd L.P. Evans VC o Gelli Angharad) i recriwtio 700 o ddynion i ymuno â Bateria Aberteifi, a chyflawnwyd hyn erbyn Awst 1939. Yn ogystal sefydlwyd Tribiwnlys ar gyfer Gwrthwynebwyr Cydwybodol ('Conchies' neu 'COs') a Byddin Tir y Merched cyn y cyhoeddwyd rhyfel ar Ddydd Sul, Medi 3ydd 1939. Roedd tystiolaeth i wersi gael eu dysgu oddi wrth y gwrthdaro yn 1914–18. Rheolwyd prisiau amrywiol fwydydd, trafodwyd cyfyngu ar fwyd a phetrol yn y Senedd ac yr oedd siarad yn gynnar ynglŷn â chonsgripsiwn i'r lluoedd arfog – arwyddion o drychineb gerllaw. Er mwyn cyfyngu ar elwa gormodol, gosododd y Llywodraeth uchafswm ar brisiau da byw.

O'i gymharu â'r Rhyfel Byd Cyntaf yr oedd llai o jingoistiaeth, mwy o hunan ymholi ac roedd pawb yn fwy ymwybodol o'r bygythiad o'r awyr o ganlyniad i'r hyn a ddigwyddodd yn nhref Guernica yn Rhyfel Cartref Sbaen pan fomiwyd y dref gan awyrennau'r Almaen. Roedd hyd yn oed y broblem o awyrennau yn hedfan yn isel yn yr ardal, yn debyg i'r hyn a brofir gan breswylwyr heddiw. Gwelodd tystion

posturing were viewed with dread and alarm.

There were signs of preparations being made as early as January 1939. The ARP (Air Raid Protection) and AFS (Auxiliary Fire Service) had been formed, whilst in Ceredigion the County Council were bickering about where to store gas masks and who would bear the cost, one Councillor commenting 'the bombers will be here before them'. The following month a letter to the Women's Institute asked for volunteers to canvass the parish of Ceulanamaesmawr for accommodation for refugees in the event of war. The problem of distribution of refugees and whether hosts should be paid for billeting them also arose.

More worrying for the future was the Government's decision to double the war establishment of the Territorial Army by trying to recruit a further 380,000 men. The Lord Lieutenant's Recruiting Committee by enlisting the aid of a local holder of the prestigious Victoria Cross, (Brigadier General L.P. Evans VC of Lovegrove) in April 1939 mounted a campaign to recruit 700 men to join the Cardigan Battery; this was eventually achieved by August 1939. Also, Tribunals for Conscientious Objectors ('Conchies' or 'CO's') and a Women's Land Army were in place before war was declared on Sunday, 3rd September 1939. There was evidence that lessons had been learned from the 1914 – 1918 conflict. Price control of various foodstuffs was being implemented, rationing of food and petrol was discussed in Parliament and there was early talk of conscription into the forces – all signs of impending disaster. To curb excessive profiteering by farmers, the Government set a maximum limit on the pricing of livestock.

In comparison to World War One there was less jingoism, more soul-searching and a greater awareness of the threat of destruction from the air as a result of what had happened to the town of Guernica in the Spanish Civil War when German planes bombed the town. There was even the problem of low flying aircraft in the area, similar to that suffered by residents today. Witnesses saw an aeroplane flying very low up Cwm Leri at Bontgoch towards Pendam and then disappear never to be heard of again. Could it be at the bottom of the lake?

awyren yn hedfan yn isel iawn i fyny Cwm Leri ym Montgoch tuag at Pendam ac yna diflannu heb sôn amdani wedi hynny. A allai fod ar waelod y llyn? Yn Borth gwelwyd yr hyn a ymddangosai fel awyren ryfel newydd yn grwnan dros doeau'r tai. O bosibl gwnaethpwyd hyn er mwyn ei harddangos i Is-farsial yr Awyrlu Pierce a oedd yn aros yn Borth.

Yr ydym yn ffodus yn Nhal-y-bont i gael adroddiad manwl o'r cyfnod hwn yn llyfrau nodiadau 'PC4' (Cwnstabl E.J. Evans-Vaughan) a gafodd ei drosglwyddo o Borth i Dal-y-bont ar Fedi 9fed 1939 am gyflog misol o £9.10s.9d 'gan gynnwys lwfans seiclo'. Darganfuwyd llyfrau nodiadau PC4 yn atig yr hen Orsaf Heddlu, (Y Lolfa, yn awr), ac maent wedi eu cyflwyno i Swyddfa Gofnodion y Sir yn Aberystwyth. Wedi ymddeol fel un o'r plismyn a roddodd y gwasanaeth hiraf yng Ngheredigion symudodd PC Evans-Vaughan i 3 Maes y Deri yn Nhal-y-bont. Cyn iddo gael ei drosglwyddo cofnododd baratoadau cynyddol ar gyfer rhyfel. Ar ddiwedd Awst yr oedd yn brysur yn cwrdd â Wardeniaid ARP, yn hyfforddi Cwnstabiliaid Rhan-amser, yn eu cynorthwyo i ddsbarthu mygydau nwy yn y Neuadd Gyhoeddus yn Borth ac yn arolygu dosbarthiadau Cymorth Cyntaf. Yr oedd yn gyfrifol am osod hysbysiadau ynglŷn â'r 'Black-outs' i fyny (dim goleuadau yn weladwy yn y nos); hysbysiadau galw i fyny i'r Fyddin, yr Awyrlu, a'r Fyddin Dirioogaethol; dosbarthu pamffledi 'Aliens' i westai; trefnu bwyd ar gyfer y plant ffoaduriaid, cwrdd â'r Pwyllgor Efaciwis er mwyn trafod cynlluniau i dderbyn mewnlifiad o efaciwis o Lerpwl a derbyn ei helmed ddur a bagiau tywod ar gyfer swyddfa'r heddlu. Dyn prysur yn wir. Roedd hyn yn wahanol iawn i'w waith arferol o gadw golwg ar ddipio defaid a chadw llygad ar y Llew Gwyn a'r Llew Du i weld a oedd yna yfed ar ôl oriau.

Cofnododd ddyletswyddau diddorol. Gwnaethpwyd archwiliad gofalus o ffoaduriaid estron yn enwedig Almaenwyr. Ymddangosodd Anna Lagmueller o Rockside, Borth ger bron yr Heddlu a chafodd Irene Jernack, morwyn Almaenig yn fferm Ffwrnais sylw arbennig. Cyflogwyd hi gan Mrs Barton, cyfreithwraig yn Llundain, a ymddangosai ei bod yn gweithredu ar ran Pwyllgor Cymorth i Ffoaduriaid Iddewig. Dywed adroddiad PC Evans-Vaughan:

In Borth what appeared to be a new fighter plane 'buzzed' the roof tops, probably as a demonstration for an Air Vice-Marshal Pierce staying at Borth.

We are fortunate in Tal-y-bont in having a detailed account of this period in the notebooks of 'PC4' (Police Constable E.J. Evans-Vaughan) who was transferred from Borth to Tal-y-bont on 9th September 1939 at a monthly salary of £9.10s. 9d 'inclusive of a pedal cycle allowance'. The notebooks of PC4 were discovered in the attic of the old Police Station (now Y Lolfa), and are deposited in the County Records Office in Aberystwyth. When he retired as one of the longest serving policemen in Ceredigion PC Evans-Vaughan moved to 3 Maes y Deri in Tal-y-bont. Prior to his transfer he recorded the escalating preparations for war. At the end of August he was busy seeing ARP Wardens, training Special Constables, assisting them in the distribution of gas masks in the Public Hall at Borth and supervising First Aid classes. He was responsible for posting up notices about the 'Black-outs' (no lights to be visible at night); Army, Air Force and Territorial Army 'Call-up' notices; distribution of 'Aliens' pamphlet to hotels; arranging food for refugee children and meeting with the Evacuee Committee to discuss plans for receiving the influx of evacuees from Liverpool. He received a steel helmet and sandbags for the police station. A busy man indeed. It was very different from his usual round of overseeing sheep dipping and keeping an eye on the White Lion and Black Lion for after hours drinking.

He recorded some interesting duties. A careful check of foreign refugees, especially Germans was made; Anna Lagmueller of Rockside, Borth reported to the Police and Irene Jernack a German domestic servant at Furnace Farm received special attention. She was employed by Mrs Barton, a solicitor in London who appeared to be acting on behalf of the Jewish Refugee Aid Committee. PC Evans-Vaughan's report states:

Has no knowledge of cars or wireless. Does not discuss political situation. Has little English. Her last address was 21 Frederck Wilhelm St., Breslau, Germany.

Has no knowledge of cars or wireless. Does not discuss political situation. Has little English. Her last address was 21 Frederck Wilhelm St., Breslau, Germany.

Daeth ychydig o ddrama i'w fywyd pan oedd yn archwilio achos posibl o ysbio yn Nyffryn Llyfnant yng Nglanrafon:

Inquiries re. people at Glanrafon House at present unoccupied, occupants went back to Birmingham 15/9/39. Caretaker of house Mrs Jones, Tŷmawr, nearby. Name of persons at Glanrafon is Prescott, 5 Hartledon Rd, Birmingham, took house for one year about four months ago. Man supposed to have a good post at Birmingham, aged about 38–40 years, no children.

Mrs Lee, wife of Col. Lee, RAMC officer: when war broke out Prescott was pro-Hitler, upholding Hitler and all his doing and running down England and calling our soldiers murderers etc.

Later Mrs Lee has seen a motorcyclist wearing field boots as used by the army in last war coming to Glanrafon and has seen Prescott and this man studying a map. She has seen a large camera also with them. When they have been talking and studying map and when she has come along, map rolled up and talking ceased.

Mrs Lee states that she heard that occupiers of Glanrafon sometimes had plenty of money at other times they had none.

Faciwîs

Mewn Cofnod o Blant Faciwîs Ar Eu Pennau Eu Hunain 1940–46, cofnodir i 21 o blant ddod i Dal-y-bont a Thaliesin. Ond mae adroddiadau ynglŷn â faciwîs yn dod i'r ardal yn llawn problemau ynglŷn â'r costau, y pwysau ar yr ysgolion (a oedd yn gweithredu trefn ddwy shifft) a bod rhai plant yn mynd yn ôl i Lerpwl. Y cynllun gwreiddiol oedd dod â 14,200 i'r Sir gyda 5,550 i'w cartrefu yn ardal Aberystwyth. Ond mewn gwirionedd dim ond oddeutu 3,600 a gyrhaeddodd a dychwelodd 200 ohonynt i Lerpwl o fewn wythnos. Erbyn Ionawr 1945 roedd 10,000 ohonynt wedi dod i Aberteifi, Sir Drefaldwyn a Meirionydd, ardaloedd lle roedd yr iaith Gymraeg, yr agwedd a phatrwm bywyd mor anhebyg ag y medrai fod oddi wrth amgylchiadau cymdeithasol slymiau Lerpwl, Birmingham a Llundain. Pan ddaeth y rhieni i Dal-y-bont i ymweld a'u plant roeddent yn

A little drama came into his life when he investigated a possible spy case in the Llyfnant Valley at Glanrafon:

Inquiries re. people at Glanrafon House at present unoccupied, occupants went back to Birmingham 15/9/39. Caretaker of house Mrs Jones, Tŷmawr, nearby. Name of persons at Glanrafon is Prescott, 5 Hartledon Rd, Birmingham, took house for one year about four months ago. Man supposed to have a good post at Birmingham, aged about 38–40 years, no children.

Mrs Lee, wife of Col. Lee, RAMC officer: when war broke out Prescott was pro-Hitler, upholding Hitler and all his doing and running down England and calling our soldiers murderers etc.

Later Mrs Lee has seen a motorcyclist wearing field boots as used by the army in last war coming to Glanrafon and has seen Prescott and this man studying a map. She has seen a large camera also with them. When they have been talking and studying map and when she has come along, map rolled up and talking ceased.

Mrs Lee states that she had heard that the occupiers of Glanrafon sometimes had plenty of money at other times they had none.

Evacuees

In a Ledger of Unaccompanied Evacuated Children of 1940–46 it is recorded that 21 children came to Tal-y-bont and Thaliesin. But reports on evacuees coming to the area are full of problems concerning the costs involved, the strain put on the schools (which operated a two-shift system) and the drift back to Liverpool of some of the children. The original plan was for 14,200 to come to the County with 5,550 to be billeted in the Aberystwyth district. Actually only about 3,600 arrived and 200 of those returned to Liverpool within one week. By January 1945, 10,000 had come to Cardigan, Montgomery and Meirioneth, areas where the Welsh language, outlook and pattern of life were poles apart from the social conditions of children from the slums of Liverpool, Birmingham and London. When parents came to Tal-y-bont to visit their children they socialised at the White Lion, the mothers drinking and smoking – a cultural shock for the local population. The villagers were Welsh speaking and had to learn Liverpool English and the Liverpudians had to learn



Faciwîs yn cyrraedd y Drenewydd, 1939 (Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru, Aberystwyth).

Evacuees arriving in Newtown, 1939 (National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth).

cymdeithasu yn y Llew Gwyn, y mamau yn yfed ac yn ysmygu – sioc diwylliannol i'r bobl leol. Cymraeg oedd iaith y pentrefwyr a bu rhaid iddynt ddysgu Saesneg Lerpwl a bu rhaid i'r plant o Lerpwl ddysgu Cymraeg. Roedd cadw arferion y cartref a'r Sul yn achosi peth tyndra; roedd traean o'r plant yn ysgolion Gogledd Ceredigion yn efaciwîs – heb athrawon ychwanegol i ymdopi â hwy. Anfonwyd rhai yn ôl adref. Cymerodd PC Evans-Vaughan ran mewn dal tri llanc o Lerpwl a oedd yn cerdded o Dal-y-bont i Borth ar ôl iddynt fynd ar y bws anghywir yn aroglî'n gryf o bersawr a'u pocedi yn orlawn, canlyniad sbri o ddwyn o siopau yn Aberystwyth. Daeth rhieni i nôl eraill adref am eu bod yn eu colli.

Er bod yna achosion o straen domestig, o gofio'r niferoedd, roedd ymddodiad cynifer o blant yn llwyddiant. Er enghraifft, cystadlodd nifer o blant o Lerpwl yn Eisteddfod y Tabernacl yn Nhal-y-bont yn Ebrill 1940 ac mae nifer o adroddiadau am y gofal da a dderbynent, er enghraifft:

Welsh. Domestic and Sunday observance customs caused some tension; one third of the children in schools in north Ceredigion were evacuees – without additional teaching staff to cope. Some were sent back home. PC Evans-Vaughan is involved in apprehending three Liverpool lads walking from Tal-y-bont to Borth after they got on the wrong bus smelling strongly of scent and with bulging pockets, the result of their shoplifting spree in Aberystwyth. Some children were taken home by parents who were missing their children.

Although there were cases of domestic strain, given the numbers involved, the assimilation of so many children was a success. For instance, a number of Liverpool evacuees competed in the Tabernacle Eisteddfod in Tal-y-bont in April 1940 and there are many reports of how well they were cared for, for example:

At Christmas 1944 Eglwys Fach Council School had a donation of £1-7-6d from Miss

At Christmas 1944 Eglwys Fach Council School had a donation of £1-7-6d from Miss B.M. Roberts towards providing a Xmas treat for 11 London evacuees – the feast took the form of a Christmas Dinner of Roast Goose, Plum Pudding, Lemonade, Apples and Oranges. (Effie James, Head Teacher)

London and Liverpool Councils sent money to ensure their evacuees could take part in Christmas activities – usually grants of between 1 and 3 shillings per child.

Liverpool children evacuated to Trefeurig were taken by bus to attend a Xmas party in the Kings Hall Aberystwyth, December 1943, and photographs were taken of the children available at 1/- each.

Also the children of Taliesin, attending Llancynfelin school. They went to the Coliseum Cinema first to see a show at 2pm before tea (plus presents) at the Kings Hall. There were 3 from Taliesin and 7 from Tal-y-bont.

Erbyn diwedd 1940 pan ddechreuwyd bomio'r prif ddinasoedd mewn difrif, cafwyd efaciwis preifat yn hytrach na rhai cyhoeddus a daeth 1,184 arall i'r ardal.

Mae'n debyg oherwydd yr angen am gyfrinachedd roedd adroddiadau PC Evans-Vaughan am weddill y rhyfel yn ymwneud yn bennaf â lladrata a llofruddiaethau gan aelodau o'r lluoedd arfog neu'r rhai a oedd wedi dianc o'r lluoedd, yn absennol heb ganiatâd. Ond yn sicr byddai wedi cymryd rhan mewn un digwyddiad yn Nhal-y-bont. Mae Tegwyn Owens yn cofio:

Aeth milwr o Dal-y-bont yn absennol heb ganiatâd gan guddio yn llofft tŷ ei fam yn Ffordd y Cwm. Pan ddaeth yr heddlu i'w arestio, dihangodd a bu'n eu gwyllo yn edrych amdano o ben y bryn yn Nhŷ'n Graig.

Tybed sut y byddai Plaid Cymru heddiw yn ymateb i'r cofnod hwn: 'Service at Bontgoch and noted address of Rev. Fred Jones noted Welsh Nationalist' (Parch. Jones oedd tad-cu Dafydd Iwan).

Ehangodd y paranoia ynglŷn â'r 'Bumed Golofn' – rhwydwaith dychmygol o elynion mewnol – i'r Comiwnyddion yn ogystal. Bu Tal-y-bont heb ei ddeintydd o Gomiwnydd, y Parchedig T.E. Nicholas a'i fab Islwyn a oedd yn dechnegydd deintyddol, tra buont yng Ngharchar Abertawe am dri mis heb brawf o dan Reoliadau Amddiffyn y Deyrnas. Wedi ymgyrch fawr, rhyddhawyd

B.M. Roberts towards providing a Xmas treat for 11 London evacuees – the feast took the form of a Christmas Dinner of Roast Goose, Plum Pudding, Lemonade, Apples and Oranges. (Effie James, Head Teacher)

London and Liverpool Councils sent money to ensure their evacuees could take part in Christmas activities – usually grants of between 1 and 3 shillings per child.

Liverpool children evacuated to Trefeurig were taken by bus to attend a Xmas party in the Kings Hall Aberystwyth, December 1943, and photographs were taken of the children available at 1/- each.

Also the children of Taliesin, attending Llancynfelin school. They went to the Coliseum Cinema first to see a show at 2pm before tea (plus presents) at the Kings Hall. There were 3 from Taliesin and 7 from Tal-y-bont.

By the end of 1940 when the bombing of major cities started in earnest, private rather than public evacuations occurred and a further 1,184 came into the area.

Probably because of the need for secrecy PC Evans-Vaughan's reports for the rest of the war are mainly to do with thefts and murders by members of the forces or deserters on AWOL (Absent With Out Leave). But he certainly would have been involved in one incident in Tal-y-bont. Tegwyn Owens, Llys Meirion, remembers:

A Tal-y-bont soldier went AWOL and hid in the loft of his mother's house in Cwm Road. When the Military Police came to arrest him he escaped and watched them searching for him from his view-point at the top of the hill at Tŷ'n Graig.

I wonder how Plaid Cymru today would react to this entry: 'Service at Bontgoch and noted address of Rev. Fred Jones noted Welsh Nationalist' (Rev. Jones was Dafydd Iwan's grandfather).

The paranoia about the 'Fifth Column' – an imaginary network of internal enemies – extended to the Communists as well. Tal-y-bont was without its popular, communist dentist Reverend T.E. Nicholas and his dental technician son Islwyn whilst they suffered three months without trial in Swansea Gaol under the Defence of the Realm Regulations. After a big campaign, they were released on Monday, 21st October 1940, but during his imprisonment



Y Parch. Fred Jones

Rev. Fred Jones

hwy ar Ddydd Llun, Hydref 21ain 1940, ond yn ystod ei garchariad cafodd y Parchedig Nicholas yr amser i ysgrifennu 100 soned.

Cyfeiriwyd at yr adeg rhwng Medi 3ydd ac Ebrill 1940 fel y 'Rhyfel Ffug', oherwydd ymddangosai mai ychydig o wrthdaro difrifol a fu ac eithrio ar y môr. Mae adroddiadau yn y papurau newydd lleol yn llawn materion yn ymwneud â throseddau yn gysylltiedig â'r 'black-outs', gorchmynion aredig ychwanegol, cynhyrchu bwyd, ac achosion tribiwnlys yn gysylltiedig ag apeliadau yn erbyn consgripsiwn i'r lluoedd arfog. Roedd y mwyafrif o'r gwrthwynebwyr cydwytodol yn mynegi eu credoau crefyddol a'u gwrthwynebiad i ladd dros wrthod ymuno ac roedd y mwyafrif ohonynt yn cael eu hamddiffyn gan weinidogion yr efengyl – yn wahanol i Ryfel 1914–18 pan anogai rhai gweinidogion ddynion ifanc i ymuno yn y gyflafan.

Gwelwyd gwir natur y bygythiad o'r Almaen gyda goresgyniad yr Iseldiroedd a Gwlad Belg ym mis Mai 1940, cwmp y Gwrthsafiad Ffrengig a'r ymgiliad o 380,000 o filwyr byddin Prydain o'r traeth yn

the Rev. Nicholas had the time to write 100 sonnets.

The period between 3rd September 1939 and April 1940 is referred to as the 'Phoney War', because there appeared to be little serious conflict except at sea. Local newspaper reports are full of matters relating to black-out offences, additional ploughing orders, food production, and tribunal cases related to appeals against conscription into the forces. Most of the conscientious objectors quoted religious beliefs and objections to killing for their refusals and most of them were defended by ministers of religion – a change from the 1914–18 War when some ministers exhorted young men to join in the slaughter.

Realisation of the true nature of the German threat came with the invasion of Holland and Belgium in May 1940, the collapse of French resistance and the evacuation of 380,000 soldiers of the British army from the beach at Dunkirk, with 60,000 left behind dead or as prisoners of war to spend the following four years in German POW camps. John Dare of

Dunkirk, gyda 60,000 yn cael eu gadael ar ôl naill ai yn farw neu i fod yn garcharorion rhyfel am y pedair blynedd nesaf mewn gwerysilloedd Carcharorion Rhyfel. Roedd John Dare o Bwlchroser, Bontgoch yn Isgorpral yn y 'Royal Army Service Corps' (RASC) a chafodd ei achub o'r traeth yn Dunkirk. Chwe deg mlynedd ar ôl y drychineb mae'n sôn am anhrefn ac arswyd yr isafbwynt yma yn hanes y rhyfel:

Mae 60 mlynedd wedi mynd heibio ers y mudo o Dunkirk a chredaf ei bod yn amser i ddweud beth ddigwyddodd yn go iawn a hynny gan un a oedd yno; gorchfygiad ydoedd, o bosibl y gorchfygiad mwyaf mewn hanes, ac nid oedd yn ogoneddus nac yn glyfar. Yr oeddwn i â chywilydd ohono, a minnau ond yn un o filoedd.

Ar yr adeg honno roedd y fyddin yn cael ei rheoli gan lawer o hen ddynion, a oedd yn meddwl mewn dull hen ffasiwn. Yr oeddent hwy yn dychmygu yr hen fath o ymladd mewn ffosydd. Nid oedd milwyr y Fyddin Dirioaethol eisiau marw dros eu gwlad, yr oeddent eisiau byw dros eu gwlad. Yr oeddwn i yn yr RASC. Yr oeddwn i yn y Cwmni Cludo'r Milwyr, ein tasg oedd trawsgludo'r Troedfilwyr i faes y gad fel eu bod yn cyrraedd yn fuan a heb flino.

Anfonwyd fi i geisio symud milwyr i orfodi ffordd drwy fyddinoedd yr Almaen er mwyn uno unwaith eto gyda'r Ffrancwyr. Arloeswyr conscript oedd y milwyr, nid oedd ganddynt hyd yn oed reiffl yr un, ni ddylent fod yno, nid oedd ganddynt siawms.

Syrthiais i gysgu yn y lori, gan ddefro a chyfrif bomwyr deifio Stuka'r Almaenwyr yn yr awyr. Roeddynt yn dod yn gant ar y tro, cant dros St. Pol, cant arall ar y ffordd yn ôl, wedi cyflawni eu gwaith a chant arall yn dod i gymryd drosodd. Cad-awyren fomio oedd y Stuka. Cynlluniwyd hi fel arf arswydus. Byddent yn dod drosodd gant ar y tro. Un wrth un byddent yn deifio i lawr gyda'u gynnuau yn tanio, yna cyn iddynt gyffwrdd â'r ddaear byddent yn troi yn ôl i fyny gan ollwng bom, bom eithaf bychan.

Parhaodd John â'i ddisgrifiad o'r anhrefn a'r dioddef ymhlith y ffoaduriaid sifil yr oeddent yn ymosod arnynt, sut y trawyd a llosgwyd ei lori, gan ddinistrio ei git, a'i ddieter:

Euthum i mewn i'r lori a oedd ar dân a'i gyrru i mewn i'r ffos er mwyn clirio'r ffordd.

Bwlchroser, Bontgoch was a Lance-Corporal in the Royal Army Service Corps (RASC) and was rescued from the beach at Dunkirk. Here on the Sixtieth Anniversary of the disaster he tells us of the chaos and horror of that lowest point in our war history:

It is now 60 years since the evacuation of Dunkirk and I think it is about time to tell the true story by one who was there; it was a defeat, possibly the greatest defeat in history, it was not glorious or clever. I for one was ashamed of it and I was only one of thousands.

At that time, the army was run by old men, with old fashioned thinking. They had visions of old type trench warfare. The Territorial Army soldiers did not want to die for their country, they wanted to live for their country. I was in the RASC. I was in a Troop Carrying Company, our job was to transport the Infantry so they arrived at the scene of action quickly and not tired.

I was sent to try to move troops to force a way through the German armies to join again with the French. The troops were conscript pioneers, they didn't even have a rifle each, they shouldn't have been there, they hadn't got a chance.

I fell asleep in the lorry, waking up and counting German Stuka dive-bombers in the sky. They came over a hundred at a time, one hundred over St. Pol another hundred on the way back, their job done and another hundred coming to take over. A Stuka was a fighter-bomber. It was designed as a terror weapon. They came over a hundred at a time. One by one, they dived down with machine guns firing, then just before they hit the ground they turned back up and dropped their bomb, quite a small bomb.

John continued with his description of the chaos and suffering of the civilian refugees who were being attacked, how his lorry was hit and burning, his kit destroyed and his anger:

I got into the burning lorry and drove it into the ditch to clear the road. Then I pulled out my revolver and fired the only shot that I fired in anger during the whole war. The aeroplanes were probably out of range by then, and I don't think that I hit anything but I had some satisfaction.

Yna tynnais fy llawddryll allan gan danio'r unig fwoled a daniais mewn dicter yn ystod y rhyfel cyfan. Mae'n debyg fod yr awyrennau yn rhy bell i ffwrdd erbyn hynny, ac nid wyf yn credu i mi saethu unrhyw beth ond cefais beth boddhad.

Gan gyrraedd y traeth yn Dunkirk gwelodd:

Yr Heddlu Milwrol yn ceisio rhoi trefn arnom, ac erbyn gyda'r nos roeddem mewn rhesi hir ar y traeth. Roedd y Llynges yno yn aros amdanom, ac roedd y Peiriannwyr Brenhinol yn defnyddio cychod a gynlluniwyd fel pontynau i fynd â ni allan at gychod y Llynges. Gan fy mod braidd yn fyr yr oedd y dŵr i fyny at fy nhrwyn erbyn i'm tro i gyrraedd, nid oedd fy nghoesau'n ddigon hir a chredaf fy mod yn troedio dŵr pan gydiodd braich gref amdanaf a'm tynnu i mewn i'r cwch. Yna ymlaen at y Chwiliwr Efrwydron 'Gossamer'. DIOLCH I DDUW FOD GANDDOM LYNAGES.

Arriving at Dunkirk beach he found that:

Military Police were trying to organise us, and in the evening we were lined up on the beach in long lines. The Navy were there waiting for us, and the Royal Engineers were using boats designed for pontoon bridges as ferry boats to take us out to the Navy vessels. Being rather short I was up to the tip of my nose when my turn came, my legs were just not long enough, and I think that I must have been treading water when a strong arm took hold of me and dragged me into the ferry boat. Then onto the Mine Sweeper 'Gossamer'. THANK GOD WE HAD A NAVY.

Preparation for a longer war continued despite the defeats and the threat of an invasion. The LDV (Local Defence Volunteers) changed its name to the Home Guard (the subject of a TV comedy series 'Dad's Army' in the 1980s). Tegwyn Owens, Llys Meirion and John Jenkins, Aberceulan



Gwarchodlu Cartref. O'r chwith yn sefyll: Jim Morgan (Maesnewydd), Haydn Ebenezer, Thomas Glandwr, Tegwyn Owens, Trefor Williams, Will Davies (Penrhîw), D.J. Thomas (Tomos y Troi), John Jenkins; y lleill, o'r chwith: Will Richards, Cliff Jenkins, Johnie Morgan, Gwyn Faulkener (Llew Gwyn), Jack Rodd Williams, Will Jones (Cwm Afon), David Morris (Central Stores), Dai Jones (Fronallt), Dafydd Williams (postmon), Eric Childs, Chris Jenkins, Eddie Cadman, Arthur (Roy) Faulkener.

Home Guard. Standing, from left: Jim Morgan (Maesnewydd), Haydn Ebenezer, Thomas Glandwr, Tegwyn Owens, Trefor Williams, Will Davies (Penrhîw), D.J. Thomas (Tomos y Troi), John Jenkins; the others, from left: Will Richards, Cliff Jenkins, Johnie Morgan, Gwyn Faulkener (Llew Gwyn), Jack Rodd Williams, Will Jones (Cwm Afon), David Morris (Central Stores), Dai Jones (Fronallt), Dafydd Williams (postman), Eric Childs, Chris Jenkins, Eddie Cadman, Arthur (Roy) Faulkener.

Parhaodd y paratoadau am ryfel hwy er gwaethaf cael ein trechu a'r bygythiad o oresgyniad. Newidiodd y Gwirfoddolwyr Amddiffyn Lleol eu henw i'r Gwarchodlu Cartref (testun y gyfres gomedi 'Dad's Army' ar y teledu yn y 1980au). Bu Tegwyn Owens, Llys Meirion a John Jenkins, Aberceulan yn gwasanaethu yn y Gwarchodlu Cartref cyn ymuno â'r fyddin. Dywedodd Tegwyn fod, 'y gwarchodlu cartref yn fwy doniol hyd yn oed na'r gyfres deledu' ac adroddodd y ddau ynglŷn â chyfarfod yn y Llew Gwyn pan daniwyd bwled reiffl yn ddamweiniol. 'Oeddw'n, yr oeddw'n yno,' medd John Jenkins. 'Roedd yr Uwch-Sarsiant yn dangos sut oedd llwytho reiffl – ac yr oeddw'n i wedi llwytho mwy o reifflau nag a wnaeth ef erioed – roedd ei fys ar y clicied – BANG!, tarodd y wal gan adlamu i fyny yn agos i'r hen wraig yn y gwely.'

Cofrestrwyd 25,000 o ferched ar gyfer eu hyfforddi ym Myddin Dir y Merched, ond dim ond 2000 a oedd yn gweithio ym myd amaeth ers dechrau'r rhyfel, er gwaethaf

served in the Home Guard before going into the army. Tegwyn commented that 'life in the home guard was even funnier than the TV programme' and both gave an account of a meeting in the Llew Gwyn when a rifle bullet was accidentally fired. 'Yes, I was there,' said John Jenkins. 'The Sergeant Major was showing how to load a rifle – and I'd loaded more rifles than he ever had – he had his finger on the trigger – BANG! It hit the wall and ricochet up near the old lady in bed.'

25,000 women were enrolled into the Women's Land Army for training but only 2000 had been placed in agricultural employment since the beginning of the war, despite the wage of 45 shillings per week paid for a 48 hour week at the age of 18. In Tal-y-bont women of the Women's Timber Corp were employed in Cwm Leri on forestry work, cutting down most of the trees for pit props for the mines. Half a dozen men felled the trees and John Rees of Tre'r-ddol dragged them down with his horse to where the women were responsible



Merched Byddin y Tir, 1944. O'r chwith yn sefyll: Olwen Jones (Llanilar), Jean Roach (Aberystwyth), Dolly Staniland (Sheffield), Iris Horry (Tal-y-bont), Morfudd Ebenezer (Tal-y-bont); ac yn y blaen: Betty Sandford (Aberystwyth) a 'Ginger' (Manchester).

Women's Land Army, 1944. Standing, from left: Olwen Jones (Llanilar), Jean Roach (Aberystwyth), Dolly Staniland (Sheffield), Iris Horry (Tal-y-bont), Morfudd Ebenezer (Tal-y-bont); and in the front: Betty Sandford (Aberystwyth) and 'Ginger' (Manchester).

cyflog o 45 swllt yr wythnos a dalwyd am wythnos 48 awr yn 18 oed. Yn Nhal-y-bont cyflogwyd merched o Gorff Coed y Merched yng Nghwm Leri i wneud gwaith coedwigo gan dorri i lawr y rhan fwyaf o'r coed ar gyfer propiau yn y pyllau glo. Roedd hanner dwsin o ddynion yn torri'r coed a John Rees o Dre'r-ddol yn eu llusgo i lawr gyda'i geffyl, lle roedd y merched yn gyfrifol am lifio'r coed.

Mae Mrs. Iris Ebeneser, Maes y Deri, a oedd ym Myddin Tir y Merched, yn cofio'r cynnwrf pan orfodwyd awyren Americanaidd i lanio ym Montgoch. Gadawodd y merched eu gwaith a rhuthro at yr Americanwyr hudolus.

Erbyn 1941 roedd cymaint o Wasanaethau Atodol fel yr ymddangosai fod Cymru gyfan, gan gynnwys Ceulanamaesmawr, yn gwisgo iwniform o amrywiol liwiau. Cofrestrai merched yn yr adrannau hynny o'r lluoedd nad oeddent yn ymladd, hynny yw, yr ATS (y Fyddin), WAAF (Yr Awyrlu), WRENS (y Llynges), tra roedd y boblogaeth sifil yn y WRVS, Brigâd Ambiwlans St Ioan, Y Groes Goch, NAAFI, AFS, ARP, Cwnstabiliaid Rhan-amser, Nyrsys – roedd hyd yn oed gweithwyr fferm mewn dillad ymladd wedi eu hadnewyddu ac wedi eu lliwio yn wyrdd, a oedd yn costio 21swllt gyda 6 cwpon dillad.

Bu Gwyneth Jones o Penlôn, a llawer un arall, yn gwasanaethu yn y WAAF, tra bod Bontgoch yn falch iawn o'r ddwy chwaer a wasanaethai yn yr ATS. Ym mis Chwefror 1943, cyflwynodd y Parchedig M Thomas ar ran Eglwys Elerch lyfr Gweddi Cyffredin yr un i May Edwards a Gwyneth Edwards, ATS, merched Mr a Mrs W.M. Edwards, Elerch House. Ar y dydd Mercher cynhaliwyd cyngerdd i groesawu May Edwards adref am ei gwyliau cyntaf. Roedd gan Bontgoch hefyd ei aelodau LDV ei hun a oedd yn cyfarfod yn yr ysgol ac roedd yr athrawon Miss Pugh a Miss Evans yn dysgu'r bechgyn a'r merched i wau eitemau ar gyfer y milwyr. Gwisgodd llawer o ferched Tal-y-bont iwniform cacï yr ATS.

Bu un aelod o'r WAAF, Dorothy Evans o Cwmere, Bontgoch farw ar wasanaeth gweithredol ac fe'i henwir ar y plac 1939–45 yn y Neuadd Goffa.

Daeth creulondeb y ffurf newydd o ryfela i Dal-y-bont pan gafwyd mai pobl leol sifil fu farw gyntaf. Yn Awst 1940 adroddwyd i Gwnstabl yr Heddlu Tom Jenkins aros o

for sawing the wood. There were four local camps for the women who were dressed in trousers – another cultural shock for the local population.

Mrs Iris Ebeneser, Maes y Deri, an ex-Land Army girl, remembers the excitement when an American plane force landed in Bontgoch; the women downed tools and rushed over to see the glamorous Yanks.

By 1941 there emerged so many Ancillary Services the whole of Wales, including Ceulanamaesmawr, appeared to be dressed in uniforms of various colours. Women were enrolled into the non-combatant sections of the forces, that is, the ATS (army), WAAF (airforce), WRENS (navy), whilst the civilian population were represented in the WVRS, St Johns Ambulance Brigade, Red Cross, NAAFI, AFS, ARP, Special Constables, Nurses – even farm-workers in reconditioned battle-dress dyed green, costing 21 shillings and 6 clothing coupons.

Gwyneth Jones of Penlôn and many others served in the WAAF, whilst Bontgoch were proud of two sisters serving in the ATS. In February 1943, Reverend M. Thomas on behalf of Elerch Church presented May Edwards and Gwyneth Edwards, ATS, daughters of Mr and Mrs W.M. Edwards, Elerch House, with a Common Prayer book each. On the Wednesday a concert was held to welcome May Edwards on her first leave. Bontgoch also had its own LDV members who met in the School and the teachers, Miss Pugh and Miss Evans, taught the boys and girls to knit items for the troops.

There were several Tal-y-bont women who wore the ATS khaki uniform. One member of the blue uniformed WAAF, Dorothy Evans of Cwmere, Bontgoch died on active service and is named on the 1939–45 plaque in the Neuadd Goffa.

The full brutality of the new form of warfare soon came home to Tal-y-bont when its first casualties were local civilians. In August 1940 it was reported that Police Constable Tom Jenkins stood guard outside his wrecked house in the south east of England on Friday night. Inside were the bodies of his step daughter aged 30 and her seven year-old daughter. They had come to keep home for him while his wife was on holiday in Tal-y-bont. He had been on duty

flaen ei dŷ yn ne ddwyrain Lloegr ar nos Wener yn ei warchod wedi iddo gael ei ddiinstrio. Tu mewn roedd corff ei lysferch 30 oed a'i merch saith oed. Roeddent wedi dod i gadw tŷ iddo tra roedd ei wraig ar ei gwyliau yn Nhal-y-bont. Yr oedd ar ddyletswydd mewn cysgodfan cyrch awyr pan gwmpodd y bom.

Bu Mrs Margaret Ann Evans, ei merch Gwladys Mary Evans 20 oed a'i mab Ceinion 18 oed farw mewn cyrch awyr yn Llundain. Maent hwy wedi eu claddu yma yn Nhal-y-bont. Yn galaru roedd Mr Nathaniel Evans (Tad a Thad-cu) a Mrs Walters, Llwyn y Gog, Tal-y-bont (Mam a Mam-gu) yn ogystal â nifer fawr o berthnasau agos yn yr ardal. Mewn pentref bychan fel Tal-y-bont byddai cysgod y tristwch hwn wedi effeithio ar y gymuned gyfan.

Ym Mai 1943 digwyddodd trychineb tebyg a gafodd effaith ar Dal-y-bont. Bu Mr Evan Lewis a'i wraig Gladys farw yn y 'Blitz' yn Llundain. Cafodd eu tŷ yn un o faestrefi Llundain ei daro yn uniongyrchol, ond bu eu merch Mair Goodine a oedd hefyd yn y tŷ ddianc gydag ond ychydig anafiadau. Roedd Mrs Lewis yn ferch i Mr John Lumley o Dal-y-bont a chafodd Mr Lewis ei eni yn Nhaigwynion, Bow Street. Goroedd wasanaeth yn y Gwarchodlu Cymreig yn rhyfel 1914–18, ond bu farw fel person sifil gyda'r dull newydd o fomio targedau sifil yn ddiwahân. Cafodd un o'u merched Buddug ei hanfon i Dal-y-bont fel efaciwi ar ddechrau'r rhyfel ac roedd mab iddynt, Ieuan, yn aelod o'r 'Police War Reserves' yn Sir Aberteifi cyn ymuno â'r Gwarchodlu Cymreig. Mewn angladd dwbl yn Nhal-y-bont claddwyd Mr a Mrs Lewis yn yr un bedd. Bu farw Mair Goodine yn Vancouver, Canada ym 1996, yn 71 oed. Bu fyw yng Nghanada am 43 mlynedd ond ar ôl ymddeol arferai ddychwelyd i Dal-y-bont bob dwy flynedd gan ymweld â'i hen ffrind Kathleen Richards, Bryn.

Roedd gwahaniaeth nodedig yn yr Ail Ryfel Byd gartref yn ogystal ag ar faes y gad. Yn lleol roedd ffermio, cynhyrchu bwyd, rheoli prisiau, dogni a chryfhau pwerau biwrocraidd yn golygu fod sifiliaid yn derbyn gwŷs a dirwy am fethu â mynychu'r gwaith, edrych allan am dân, amrywiol wasanaethau rhan-amser neu wrthod cymryd efaciwis a chaiff hyn i gyd ei gofnodi yn y *Welsh Gazette* a'r *Cambrian News*. Mae Jim Hammonds, Bryn y Wawr yn cofio:

in an air raid shelter at the time the bomb fell.

Mrs Margaret Ann Evans, her daughter, Gwladys Mary Evans, aged 20 and son, Ceinion, aged 18 were killed in an air-raid in London. They are buried here in Tal-y-bont. The bereaved were Mr Nathaniel Evans (father and grandfather) and Mrs Walters, Llwyn y Gog, Tal-y-bont (mother and grandmother) as well as a large number of close relatives in the area. In a small village such as Tal-y-bont the shadow of sadness would have overwhelmed the whole community.

In May 1943 a similar tragedy occurred which had an impact on Tal-y-bont. Mr Evan Lewis and his wife Gladys were victims of the London 'Blitz'. Their house in a London suburb received a direct hit and they were killed, but their daughter Mair Goodine who was also in the house, escaped with slight injuries. Mrs Lewis was the daughter of Mr John Lumley of Tal-y-bont and Mr Lewis was born at Taigwynion, Bow Street. He survived service in the Welsh Guards in the 1914–18 war, but became a civilian victim of the new indiscriminate bombing of civilian targets. One of their daughters, Buddug, was evacuated to Tal-y-bont in the early days of the war and a son, Ieuan was a member of the police war reserves in Cardiganshire before joining the Welsh Guards. In a double funeral at Tal-y-bont Mr and Mrs Lewis were buried in the same grave. Mair Goodine (formerly of Gwynllys, Tal-y-bont) died in Vancouver, Canada in 1996 aged 71. She had lived in Canada for 43 years but after retiring returned to Tal-y-bont every two years and frequently visited her long-standing friend Kathleen Richards of Bryn.

There was a notable difference in the conduct of the Second World War at home as well as on the battlefield. Locally farming, food production, price control, rationing and a strengthening of the bureaucratic powers meant that civilians were summoned and fined for failing to attend work, fire-watching, various part-time services or refusing to take in evacuees all of which are recorded in the *Welsh Gazette* and the *Cambrian News*. Jim Hammonds, Bryn y Wawr recalls:

At 14 years old, as a messenger at a local Blood Transfusion Centre, I had to sleep two

Pan oeddwn yn negesydd yn y Ganolfan Trallwysu Gwaed yn 14 oed roeddwn yn cysgu ddwywaith yr wythnos gyda fy meic ger llaw. Pan yn 16 oed roeddwn yn yr AFS (Gwasanaeth Tân Cynorthwyol) gyda beic modur ac iwnifform dyn tân. Fy atgof mwyaf byw oedd cael fy ngalw, yn 16 oed, i'r Swyddfa Gyflogi a chael fy mygwoth gan ddyn bychan y tu ôl i ddesg fawr, gyda gwis petawn yn colli Sadwrn arall o'r ffatri awyrennau lle yr oeddwn yn gweithio.

Mae nifer o bobl hŷn yn eu saithdegau yn cofio y dyddiau hynny a'r hanner canrif a gymerodd i leihau'r pwerau awtocratig hynny a gyflwynwyd. Roedd yn rhyfel pryd oedd i'r boblogaeth sifil yn ogystal â'r lluoedd arfog eu rhan ac o ganlyniad gwelwyd dioddef enbyd a miliynau o sifiliaid yn cael eu lladd.

Y prif wahaniaeth yn yr ymladd oedd rhwyddineb y gwrthdaro. Arswyd pob cadlywydd oedd yr ymladd statig yn y ffosydd a gafwyd ym 1914–18. Roedd llai o jingoistiaeth 'Gungho', a mwy o'r agwedd 'Dewch i ni aros yn fyw a mynd yn ôl adref'. Diolch byth gwelir llawer llai o enwau ar gofebion rhyfel mewn trefi a phentrefi drwy'r wlad o dan y dyddiadau 1939–45.

Mae yna nifer o ddynion a gwragedd yng Ngheulanaesmawr yn eu saithdegau sydd â phrofiadau ac yn medru adrodd hanesion o'r cyfnod hwn. Nid oes cymaint o luniau o'r rhai hynny a laddwyd ar faes y gad yn ymddangos yn y papurau lleol. Ar adegau byddai rhywun yn meddwl nad oedd rhyfel yn bodoli, ond efallai fod hynny oherwydd yr hyn a elwir yn Rhybuddion 'D' (Cytundeb anffurfiol i beidio â chodi ofn drwy gyhoeddi newyddion penodol)

Ar y 'Ffrynt Cartref' fel y gelwid ef roedd angen amddiffyn y wlad oddi wrth ymosodiadau uniongyrchol o'r awyr a chefnogi'r 'ymdrech ryfel' ac roedd hyn yn creu awyrgylch o ymrwymiad a chydweithrediad. Erbyn Chwefror 1943 roedd 52 o bobl yn Nhal-y-bont yn 'Rhoddwyr Gwaed', roedd garddwyr lleol yn rhan o'r 'Palu er mwyn Buddugoliaeth' a 'Chlybiau Lotment' ac adroddwyd:

Mae yna nifer o arddwyr brwdfrydig yn Nhal-y-bont ac mae llawer o gystadleuaeth rhwng cymdogion. Trafodir manteision ffurfio Cymdeithas Lotment a gobeithir galw

nights a week with my bicycle nearby. At 16 years old I was in the AFS (Auxiliary Fire Service) with a motor-cycle and a fireman's uniform. The most vivid memory I have is being summoned to the Labour Exchange at 16 and threatened by a little man behind a big desk with a summons if I missed another Saturday at the aircraft factory where I worked.

Many elderly people in their seventies will recall those days and the fifty years it has taken to dilute the autocratic powers introduced. It was a war in which civilians as well as uniformed forces were implicated, resulting in unbelievable suffering and millions of civilian deaths.

The main difference in the fighting was the fluidity of the combat. The dread of all the commanders was the static trench warfare experienced in 1914–18. There was less 'Gungho' jingoism, more of an attitude of 'Let's stay alive and get back home'. Thankfully one can see a much smaller number of names on war memorials in towns and villages throughout the country under the dates 1939–45.

There are still many men and women here in Ceulanamaesmawr in their 70s who have experiences and can recount tales from this era. There are not so many photographs of those killed in action printed in the local newspapers. At times one would think there was no war on at all, but that may be because of what journalists know of as 'D' Notices (An informal agreement not to create alarm by publishing certain news)

On the 'Home Front' as it was called the need to defend the country from direct aerial attack and support the 'war effort' created an atmosphere of involvement and co-operation. By February 1943, 52 people in Tal-y-bont were 'blood donors,' local gardeners were part of the 'Dig for Victory' and 'Allotment Clubs'. It was reported that:

There are a number of keen gardeners in Tal-y-bont and there is much rivalry amongst neighbours. The advantage of forming an Allotments Association is being discussed and it is hoped that a meeting of those interested will be called shortly.

A 'Prisoner of War Fund' raised £606 by organising money-raising events; 'War Savings' and a 'Wings for Victory

cyfarfod o'r rhai hynny sydd â diddordeb cyn bo hir.

Roedd £606 yn y 'Gronfa Carcharorion Rhyfel' o ganlyniad i drefnu digwyddiadau i godi arian. Roedd 'Cynilion Rhyfel' ac 'Ymgyrch Adenydd ar gyfer Buddugoliaeth' yn perswadio trefi a phentrefi i roi arian tuag at eu hawyren Spitfire arbennig eu hunain neu awyren bomio Lancaster tra roedd llongau rhyfel yn cael eu 'mabwysiadu' gan drefi.

Roedd bywyd cymdeithasol Ceulanamaesmawr yn ffynnu o ganlyniad i'r digwyddiadau hyn a phresenoldeb cymaint o bersonél y Gwasanaethau a'r Lluoedd Arfog. Ni allai sylfaenwyr y Neuadd Goffa fod wedi medru rhagweld y defnydd a fyddai yn cael ei wneud o'r adeilad fel canolfan adloniant mewn Rhyfel Mawr arall. Ym mis Chwefror 1943 cynhaliwyd dawns yno i godi arian i Fyddin Tir y Merched ac roedd Catrawd y Canonau Brenhinol yn darparu'r band. Trefnwyd dawns lwyddiannus hefyd yn y neuadd gan Miss R. Owen o Lys Terfyn ac aelodau Corff Coed y Merched i godi arian at Gronfa Les Byddin y Tir. Daeth band o Aberystwyth a chynorthwywyd hwy gan Sefydliad y Merched, tra roedd yr Awyr-Siarsiant John Brown a Chorporal Thomson yn arweinyddion.

Cynhaliwyd rhai digwyddiadau o ganlyniad i gwynion nad oedd trefniant yn bodoli ar gyfer croesawu dynion a merched ifanc adref o'r Gwasanaethau. 'Bu tri dyn gartref o dramor yn ddiweddar ac ni nodwyd hynny mewn unrhyw fodd.' Yn ddiweddarach, rhoddwyd croeso arbennig i ddynion a merched adref gyda chaniatâd, gyda'u henwau yn ymddangos yn y wasg leol a chyngherddau yn cael eu cynnal er eu mwyn. Bu Gwyn Hughes o Law-cwm-mawr, a Jim Ellis o Penrow gartref a threfnwyd Gyrfa Chwist ar eu rhan gan Gronfa Cysuron Rhyfel Elerch, tra chynhaliwyd Cyngerdd ar gyfer y chwiorydd Evans a oedd adref o'r ATS, yn Ysgol Bontgoch.

Daeth rhai adref o'r Lluoedd Arfog yn gwisgo medalau am ddewrder, er enghraifft Corporal Gomer Francis o Brynfa a wasanaethai gyda'r Adran Awyrfilwyr y Ffiwsilwyr Brenhinol Cymreig ac a wisgai'r Fedal Filwrol, ond a ddywedai yn ddiymhongar, 'Ni wn pam y derbyniais ef'

Campaign' persuaded towns and villages to donate money towards their own special Spitfire fighter plane or Lancaster bomber whilst warships were 'adopted' by a town.

The social life of Ceulanamaesmawr thrived as a result of these events and the presence of so many Service and Forces personnel. The founders of the Neuadd Goffa in 1920 could not have visualised the eventual use of the premises as an entertainment centre for yet another Great War. In February 1943 there was a dance there in aid of the Women's Land Army and the Royal Artillery Regiment supplied the band. Miss R. Owen of Llys Terfyn and members of the Women's Timber Corps also organised a successful dance in aid of the Women's Land Army Benevolent Fund at the Hall. They had a band from Aberystwyth and were helped by the Tal-y-bont WI, whilst the Masters of Ceremony were a Flight Sgt John Brown and a Corporal Thompson.

Some events were the result of complaints that there was no organisation in existence for welcoming home young men and women from the Services. 'Three men have recently been home from overseas and their visit was completely unheralded and unsung.' Eventually, men and women on leave were given a special welcome, their names appearing in the local press and concerts laid on for their benefit. Gwyn Hughes of Llawr-cwm-mawr, and Jim Ellis of Penrow came home on leave and a Whist Drive by the Elerch War Comforts Fund was organised on their behalf, whilst a Concert for the Evans' sisters home on leave from the ATS was held in Bontgoch school.

Some Forces personnel came home on leave wearing medals for bravery, for example, Corporal Gomer Francis of Brynfa serving with the Paratrooper Section of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers who wore the Military Medal, but said modestly, 'I don't know why I was awarded it' (it is awarded for very brave acts). His medal is now on display at the Royal Welsh Fusilier Museum in Caernarfon Castle. Generally, servicemen were greatly relieved to have some respite from military routine or combat especially if they had spent long periods overseas. Trooper Jones of Bryntirion served overseas for three years and Mr J. Radford of Golden Keys was also overseas for a long period. It was reported that Sergeant David Williams,



Gomer Francis

(fe'i rhoddir am weithrediadau dewr iawn). Arddangosir ei fedal yn awr yn Amgueddfa'r Ffiwsilwyr Brenhinol Cymreig yng Nghastell Caernarfon. Yn gyffredinol roedd y rhai yn y Gwasanaethau yn teimlo rhyddhad i gael gorffwys oddi wrth orchwylion milwrol neu frwydro yn enwedig os oeddent wedi treulio cyfnodau hir dramor. Bu'r Marchfilwr Jones o Fryntirion yn gwasanaethu dramor am dair blynedd a bu Mr J. Radford o 'Golden Key' dramor am gyfnod hir hefyd. Adroddwyd bod Sarsiant David Williams, Penrhiw (RAF), I.E. Evans, Tanycoed (y Fyddin) a Gwyneth Jones, Penlon, (WAAF) adref ar yr un adeg ym Mai 1943. Trist yw nodi i'r Sarsiant Williams gael ei ladd 8 mis yn ddiweddarach yn 29 oed pan yn hedfan dros dir y gelyn.

Yn awr ym mlwyddyn y Mileniwm 2000, ceir llai a llai o gyn-filwyr, yn enwedig y rhai hynny a gafodd 'ryfel gwael' o'i gymharu â'r miliynau a gafodd yr hyn a elwid yn 'rhyfel da'(y rhai a arhosodd gartref heb

Penrhiw, (RAF) I. Evans, Tanycoed (Army) and Gwyneth Jones, Penlôn, (WAAF) were on leave at the same time in May 1943. Sadly, eight months later, Sergeant Williams died at the age of 29 whilst flying over enemy territory.

There is now, in the Millennium Year 2000, a diminishing number of veterans, especially those who had 'a bad war' as opposed to the millions who had what is referred to as 'a good war' (home-based non-combatants). A quick poll has identified at least 20 veterans who served overseas, but sadly many have now died and the remainder in their 70s and 80s find it psychologically disturbing to revive memories of the horrors and hardship.

The late Frank Evans has left a detailed record of his experience as a prisoner of war of the Japanese in his book *Yn Nwylo'r Nippon* (In the Hands of the Nippon) (Gwasg Gomer). Given the hardship and psychological trauma he suffered, it was a

ymladd). Cyfrifwyd o leiaf 20 o gyn-filwyr a wasanaethodd dramor, ond trist yw nodi fod nifer ohonynt wedi marw erbyn hyn ac mae'r gweddill yn eu 70au a'u 80au ac maent yn ei chael yn seicolegol anodd i adfywio'r atgofion o'r arswyd a'r caledi.

Ceir adroddiad manwl o brofiadau'r diweddar Frank Evans pan oedd yn garcharor rhyfel i'r Siapaneaid, yn ei lyfr *Yn Nwylo'r Nippon* (Gwasg Gomer). O gofio'r caledi a'r effaith seicolegol a ddiodefodd, yr oedd yn ddewr i ail-fyw'r profiadau yn ei lyfr. Yr oedd hyd yn oed yn fwy dewr 40 mlynedd yn ddiweddarach pan aeth i ymweld ag Oeyama yn Siapan lle y bu'n garcharor. Rhoddwyd croeso sifig iddo gan Faer Kaya-cho lle y dadorchuddiodd gofeb i'r carcharorion a fu farw yn y gwersyll carcharorion rhyfel.

Dywed yn ei lyfr fod gan y Siapaneaid gywilydd o'r hyn a ddigwyddodd yn ystod y rhyfel ac wrth gymodi maddeuai i'w gyn-elynyon gan ddatgan:

Mae'n amhosibl anghofio – y creulondeb a ddiodefais yw'r peth mwyaf a ddigwyddodd i mi yn ystod fy oes. Ond yr wyf wedi maddau.

Mae Cymdeithas Cyn-filwyr Seren Burma yn parhau i fodoli yng Ngogledd Ceredigion (Medi 2000) heddiw. Roedd gan Môn

courageous act on his part to relieve the experiences by writing his book. It was even more courageous 40 years later to revisit Oeyama in Japan where he was imprisoned. He was given a civic welcome by the mayor of Kaya-cho where he unveiled a memorial to the prisoners who died in the POW camp. He comments in his book that the Japanese were ashamed of what had happened during the war and in this mood of reconciliation he forgave his former enemies stating:

Forgetting is impossible – the cruelty I suffered is the biggest thing that has happened in my life. But I have forgiven.

A Burma Star Veterans organisation still survives in north Ceredigion today (September 2000). Môn Williams (Maes y Deri) who served in Burma with the Royal Berkshire Regiment had many memories of atrocious conditions and the barbaric enemy he faced. He died, at the age of 62, on the first of December 1986.

Scanning the local and national newspapers from 1943 onwards one can sense the shift from a mood of defeat to hope of victory despite the bombing. American servicemen were becoming a common sight here and there is a sad report



Rhydwen Mitchell a Dwynwen Morgan wrth y gofeb ym Mharc Heddwch Kaya-cho, 1994.

Rhydwen Mitchell and Dwynwen Morgan at the memorial in Kaya-cho Peace Park, 1994.

Williams o Maes y Deri a fu'n gwasanaethu yn Burma gyda Chatrawd Frenhinol Berkshire nifer o atgofion o'r amodau erchyll a'r gelyn barbaraid a wynebant. Bu farw ar y 1af o Ragfyr 1986 yn 62 oed.

Wrth astudio papurau newydd lleol a chenedlaethol o 1943 ymlaen mae rhywun yn synhwyro symudiad o ymdeimlad o gael crasfa i un o obaith am fuddugoliaeth er gwaetha'r bomio. Daeth milwyr Americanaidd yn olygfa gyffredin yma a cheir adroddiad trist o filwr o Ganada yn cael ei ladd yn Stryd y Bont, Aberystwyth tra'n cael ei yrru yng nghefn lori'r fyddin.

Yn ddiau daeth y trobwynt yn y rhyfel pan ddechreuwyd ar y glaniad mwyaf a welodd y byd erioed, y glanio yn Normandi ar Fehefin 6ed 1944, y cyfeirir ato fel 'D-Day', 'Operation Overlord' a gan y Ffrancwyr fel 'le Liberation'. Mae tri cyn-filwr, Tegwyn Owens, Llys Meirion, John Jenkins, Aberceulan a Jim Hammonds, Bryn y Wawr a fu yn Normandi ac yn byw yn awr yn Nhal-y-bont yn cofio graddfa anferth y llynges oresgyn a'r rhan a gymeront wedi hynny mewn sawl brwydr drwy Ffrainc, Gwlad Belg, yr Iseldiroedd a'r Almaen.

Gwasanaethodd Tegwyn, 19 oed yn 1944, gyda'r Peirianwyr Mecanyddol a Thrydanol Brenhinol, a oedd ynghlwm wrth y 'South Staffordshire Infantry Regiment' ac yn gyfrifol am atgyweirio ac adfer cerbydau ymladd arfog mewn brwydrau. Mae'n cofio glanio mewn 'Bren gun carrier' am 'H6' ('D-Day' awr 6, Mehefin 6, 1944) ar y 'Traeth Aur' ger Arromanches. Goroedd Tegwyn bum wythnos o ymladd yn Normandi ac aeth ymlaen i gael profiad o'r brwydro yn yr Ardennes, o groesi'r afon Rhine, a'r brwydro ar dir yr Almaenwyr. Cafodd ryddhad o'r fyddin yn 1947. Mae'n parhau i gofio ei rif milwrol ar ôl 60 mlynedd.

Mae John, 18 oed yn 1944, yn ffodus i fod yn fyw, ar ôl ei anafu yn Normandi ac wedyn yn ddifrifol iawn gan fwledi yn yr Iseldiroedd. Dywedodd:

Rwyf yn ddiolchgar fy mod yn dal i fod yma, dyna fy marn i. Pan oeddwn yn yr ysbyty ym 1944, petai rhywun wedi dweud wrthyf y byddwn yn dal i fod yn fyw yn y flwyddyn 2000, byddwn wedi dweud 'Peidiwch â bod mor wirion'. Ond, dyma fi.

Yr wyf yn mwynhau bob diwrnod yn awr. Yr wyf wedi bod yn mynd i Sbaen bob blwyddyn. Priodais am yr eildro yn Gretna Green.

of a Canadian soldier being killed in Bridge Street, Aberystwyth whilst riding in the back of an army lorry.

The turning point of the war undoubtedly came with the launching of the greatest amphibious landing the world had ever known, the Normandy landing of 6th June 1944, variously referred to as 'D-Day', 'Operation Overlord' and by the French as 'le Liberation'. Three Normandy veterans living in Tal-y-bont: Tegwyn Owens of Llys Meirion, John Jenkins of Aberceulan and Jim Hammonds of Bryn y Wawr recall the sheer scale of the invasion fleet and their subsequent involvement in the many battles through France, Belgium, Holland and Germany.

Tegwyn (aged 19 on D-Day) served in the REME (Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers) attached to the South Staffordshire Infantry Regiment which was responsible for the recovery and repair of armoured fighting vehicles in battle. He remembered vividly his landing in a Bren gun carrier at H6, the 6th hour of D-Day, 6th June 1944 on 'Gold Beach' near Arromanches. Tegwyn survived the five weeks of fighting in Normandy and went on to experience the battles in the Ardennes, the crossing of the Rhine and the fighting on German soil. He was 'demobbed' in 1947 and can still remember his Army number 60 years later.

John (aged 18 on D-Day) is lucky to be alive, having suffered a slight wound in Normandy and very serious bullet wounds later in Holland. He commented:

I'm glad I'm still here, that's what I think. When I was in hospital in 1944, if somebody had told me I'd still be alive in the year 2000, I would have said, 'Don't be so bloody stupid'. But I'm here.

I enjoy every day now. I've been going to Spain every year. I got married a second time in Gretna Green.

Like Tegwyn he landed on 'Gold Beach' at Arromanches in Normandy with the Duke of Wellington Regiment and was the only Welshman in his battalion. Given the high casualties in the infantry, he was lucky to survive especially the eight weeks of vicious battles in Normandy. He remembers the scene confronting him as he and his comrades disembarked:

Fel y gwnaeth Tegwyn, glaniodd ar y Traeth Aur yn Arromanches yn Normandi gyda Chatrawd Dug Wellington, yr unig Gymro yn y bataliwn. O gofio'r nifer fawr a gafodd eu lladd ymysg y milwyr troed, yr oedd yn lwcus i oroesi, yn enwedig gydag wyth wythnos o frwydro mileinig yn Normandi. Mae'n cofio'r olygfa a'i hwynebai wrth iddo ef a'i gymdeithion lanio.

Ni chredais erioed y byddwn yn dod allan ohono. Yr oeddem yn ddiniwed, nid oedd neb yn gwybod. Pan aethom allan yno, nid oeddem yn gwybod unrhyw beth amdano, nes i ni weld rhywun yn cael ei saethu neu ei chwythu'n ddarnau.

Yn yr Iseldiroedd cafodd John a Jim y profiad o ymladd stryd wrth stryd gyda'i gilydd (er na wnaethant gwrdd) pan oedd sgwadron tanciau Jim yn cefnogi catrawd John yn y frwydr am ryddhau tref s'Hertogenbosch. Mae'r boblogaeth yn awr yn anrhydeddu'r ddwy gatrawd hon gyda phlac yn Neuadd y Dref a rhyddfraint y dref.

Mae'n anodd empathyddio gyda chyn-filwr a aeth drwy'r trawma a brofwyd gan John. Mae'n brofiad hynod bersonol gydag atgofion poenus a pharhaus yn fflachio o flaen ei lygaid, ac mae'n anodd cyfleu hyn i hyd yn oed y rhai sydd yn agos atoch. Wedi ei glwyfo gan fwledi saethwr Almaenig, a aeth yn syth i'w ysgyfaint, bu'n gorwedd am sawl awr o fewn cyrraedd golygon y saethwr, hyd y cafodd ei achub gan ei gymdeithion. Ysgrifennodd nai O.M. Edwards (sylfaenwr yr Urdd) lythyr yn Gymraeg at fam John pan glwyfwyd ef. Oherwydd y perygl o symud y fwled, a oedd yn agos i'w galon, cafodd ei hedfan yn ôl i 'Blighty' er mwyn i arbenigwr o Lundain gyflawni'r llawdriniaeth anodd. Aethpwyd ag ef i Ysbyty Harefield (ysbyty TB) gyda dim ond dau arall o'r lluoedd arfog yno, sef morwr a chomando o'r Iseldiroedd. Gwyddai ei dad a'i fam ei fod wedi ei glwyfo ond ni wyddent lle yr oedd.

Yn y diwedd aeth Mr Jones y bwtsiwr â'i dad a'i fam i Lundain i'w weld a bu nifer o drigolion Tal-y-bont yn ymweld ag ef, yn eu mysg Valma Jones a oedd yn dysgu yn Reading, Kathleen Richards ac eraill.

Dychwelodd John i'r pentref a byw bywyd llawn, gan gymryd rhan yng Nghymdeithas Hen-filwyr Normandi, un o aelodau cyntaf y Clwb Pysgota, rheoli tîm

I never thought I would come out. We were naive, nobody knew. When we went out there we didn't know anything about it, until we saw somebody being shot or blown to bits.

In Holland, John and Jim experienced street by street fighting together (although they never met) when Jim's tank squadron supported John's regiment in the battle and liberation of the town of s'Hertogenbosch. The population now honours both their regiments with a plaque in the Town Hall and the freedom of the town.

It is difficult to empathise with a veteran with the trauma experienced by John. An intensely personal experience of recurring, painful, memory flashbacks, is difficult to convey even to those close to you.

Wounded by a German sniper's bullets, which lodged in his lung, he lay for several hours within the range of the sniper's sights until rescued by his comrades. The nephew of O.M. Edwards (the founder of the Urdd) wrote a letter in Welsh to John's mother when he was wounded. Because of the danger of removing a bullet close to his heart he was flown back to 'Blighty' to enable a London specialist to undertake the delicate operation. He was taken to Harefield Hospital (a TB hospital) with only two other servicemen there, a sailor and a Dutch commando. His mother and father knew he was wounded, but didn't know where he was. Eventually, Mr Jones, the butcher, took his parents to London to see him and he also had visits from several Tal-y-bont residents, amongst them Valma Jones who was teaching in Reading, Kathleen Richards and others.

John returned to the village to live a full life, being active in the Normandy Veterans' Association, a founder member of the Angling Club, managing the football team, playing darts for 21 years and participating in the Tal-y-bont Show as well as other activities of the village community. He is now on a 100 per cent disability pension. He bemoans the changes in Tal-y-bont today:

One of the biggest changes now is when I go to the pub. I don't know anyone. All my mates have gone, except Tegwyn and myself. We used to play darts and have a job to throw the darts because there were so many people there at the White and the Black years ago. Four

pêl-droed, chwarae dartiau am 21 mlynedd a chymryd rhan yn Sioe Tal-y-bont yn ogystal â gweithgareddau cymunedol eraill yn y pentref. Yn awr mae'n derbyn pensiwn anabled 100%. Mae'n gresynu ynglŷn â'r newidiadau yn Nhal-y-bont heddiw:

Un o'r newidiadau mwyaf yn awr yw os byddaf yn mynd i'r dafarn. Nid wyf yn adnabod unrhyw un. Mae pawb o'm ffrindiau wedi mynd, ar wahân i Tegwyn a minnau. Yr oeddem yn arfer chwarae dartiau ac yn ei chael yn anodd i daflu dartiau oherwydd bod y Llew Du a'r Gwyn yn orlaw, flynyddoedd yn ôl. Pedwar tîm, dau ym mhob un. Mae'r byrddau dartiau yn dal i fod yno. Byddwn i'n arfer mynd yno i chwarae gêm o ddominos ond nid oes chwarae dominos mwyach.

Atgofion Jim o 'D-Day', ac yntau'n ddeunaw oed, oedd eistedd yn ei safle ar ben tyred ei danc yn gwylio cannoedd o gychod glanio tanciau a milwyr traed bob ochr iddo a chyn belled ag y gallai'r llygad weld. Roedd ei danc ef yn un o bedwar a wasgwyd i mewn i LCT (Landing Craft Tank) ac a oedd i lanio a chefnogi'r don gyntaf o filwyr traed wrth iddynt ymosod. Roedd y colofnau o gychod glanio yn bownsio ar y dŵr, rai ohonynt gyda balwnau anferth yn hedfan arnynt er mwyn rhwystro awyrennau'r gelyn, yn olygfa drawiadol i'r trwper diniwed. Fel John Jenkins mae'n cofio ei ddiniweidrwydd:

Roeddem i gyd yn esgus bod yn ddi-hid, ond yn dyfalu a fyddem yn goroesi. Wrth edrych yn ôl yn awr yn y flwyddyn 2000, roeddem mor ifanc, mor ddiniwed ac mor amharod ar gyfer erchyllterau rhyfel yr oeddem ar fin eu hwynebu. Fel gynnwr a dyn radio yn nhanc y Swyddog Rhagchwilio, ein swyddogaeth oedd glanio ar Draeth y Cleddyf a gyrru ymlaen i Caen gyda'r milwyr traed gan adrodd yn ôl i'r pedwar sgwadron tanciau yn ein catrawd a oedd yn gwneud eu ffordd i mewn o'r traeth. Roedd y sŵn, y mwg, arogl y cordeit, y difrod anghredadwy, y diffyg parch at eiddo wrth inni wneud ein ffordd drwy waliau, gerddi, cnydau a pherthi yn anodd ei ddychmygu heddiw.

Cyfeiriwyd at 'D-Day' fel 'Y Diwrnod Hwya' gan awdur a gwneuthurwr ffilm a byddai'r rhai hynny a gymerodd ran yn cytuno. Wedi ymlwybro pum milltir i mewn i'r tir ac o fewn golwg Caen roedd criw y tanc

teams, two in each. The dart boards are still there. I used to go there to play a game of dominoes, but dominoes are not played anymore.

Jim's memories of D-Day, when he was 18 years old, were from his perch, sitting on top of the turret of his tank, viewing the hundreds of tank and infantry landing craft on either side as far as the eye could see. His tank was one of four squeezed onto an LCT (Landing Craft Tank) and scheduled to land in support of the first wave of assault infantry. The bouncing columns of landing craft, some flying huge, inflated balloons to deter enemy aircraft, were a spectacular sight for the naive trooper. Like John Jenkins he recalls his naivety:

We all put up a show of nonchalance, but all wondered whether we would survive. Looking back now in the year 2000, we were so young, so naive and so unready for the horrors we were about to face. As gunner and radio operator in the tank of the Reconnaissance Officer, our role was to land on Sword Beach and push forward to Caen with the infantry and report back to the four tank squadrons of our regiment deploying inland from the beach. The noise, the smoke, the smell of cordite, the incredible damage, the disregard for property as we pounded our way through walls, gardens, crops and hedges is hard to imagine today.

D-Day has been referred to as 'The Longest Day' by author and film-maker and those who were involved would agree. Having penetrated five miles inland within sight of Caen the tank crew were lucky to be half a mile to the side of the main German armoured counter-attack which reached as far as the beach before it was repulsed. 'We were all very lucky,' said Jim. 'Our infantry and tanks did not know how to work together and we were facing one of the most efficient fighting machines in Europe with several years of ruthless battle experience.'

By 5.00 p.m. the move forward had ground to a halt as the infantry waited for the tank support which we had radioed for. I remember then witnessing one of the most memorable displays of force ever, which stopped all fighting on both sides. Our tank was outside the farmhouse where the

yn ffodus i fod hanner milltir i'r ochr o'r prif wrth-ymosodiad arfog Almaenaidd a gyrhaeddodd cyn belled â'r traeth cyn iddynt gael eu hatal. 'Yr oeddem yn lwcus iawn,' meddai Jim. 'Nid oedd ein milwyr traed a'n tanciau yn gwybod sut roedd cydweithio ac yr oeddem yn wynebu un o beiriannau ymladd mwyaf effeithlon Ewrop gyda sawl blwyddyn o brofiad o frwydro ffyrnig.'

Erbyn 5.00pm roedd y milwyr traed wedi peidio â symud ymlaen gan aros am gymorth y tanciau a geisiwyd amdanynt gyda radio. Cofiaf yna weld un o'r arddangosfeydd mwyaf cofiadwy erioed o rym, a roddodd derfyn ar yr ymladd o'r ddwy ochr. Roedd ein tanc y tu allan i'r ffermdy lle gosodwyd 'advance post' y milwyr traed pan glywyd sŵn grwnan isel o gyfeiriad y traeth a gwelwyd cannoedd o awyrennau Dakota yn hedfan ar yr un uchder gan ymestyn yn ôl tua'r gorwel. Wrth iddynt ddynesu drifftiodd miloedd o barasiwtiau lliwgar i lawr. Ger llaw ein tanc, arhosai'r unig sifiliad Ffrengig a oeddwn i'w weld neu'i glywed yn ystod y 10 wythnos nesaf yn ailadrodd, 'Oh la la!', 'Oh la la'.

Dilynwyd y brwydro gwaedlyd yn Normandi gan symudiad llwyddiannus drwy

infantry's advance post was set up when a low drone from the direction of the beach brought into view hundreds of Dakota aircraft all flying at the same height and stretching back to the far horizon. As they approached, thousands of coloured parachutes drifted down. The only French civilian I was to see or hear for the next 10 weeks stood beside our tank and exclaimed repeatedly, 'Oh la la!', 'Oh la la'.

The bloody battles in Normandy were followed by the successful advance through France, Belgium, Holland and finally Germany, and happily the three veterans are still with us today, here in Tal-y-bont, wondering. 'Did it really happen?'

Sadly, there are those who never returned to Tal-y-bont. Jack Rodd Williams of Islwyn served in the RAF and died aged 23 when his plane was destroyed over Germany in 1944. He is remembered as a cheerful, likeable lad from a family who had been very active in the district. In the Bethel Chapel Report of 1944, the Minister, the Rev. Fred Jones in his address wrote, 'Official notice has now been received that our young friend Jack Rodd Williams has died. Some from his plane survived and it was



Y Tri Mysgedwr. O'r chwith: Jack Rodd Williams, John Jenkins, Tegwyn Owens.

The Three Musketeers. From the left: Jack Rodd Williams, John Jenkins, Tegwyn Owens.

Ffrainc, Gwlad Belg, yr Iseldiroedd ac yn olaf yr Almaen, a da yw dweud fod y tri cyn-filwr yn dal i fod gyda ni yma yn Nhal-y-bont, yn dyfalu. 'A ddigwyddodd hyn yn go iawn?'

Trist yw nodi na ddychwelodd rhai i Dal-y-bont. Roedd Jack Rodd Williams yn yr Awyrlu Brenhinol a chafodd ei ladd yn 23 oed pan ddinistriwyd ei awyren uwch ben yr Almaen ym 1944, caiff ei gofio fel llanc siriol, hoffus o deulu a fu yn weithgar iawn yn yr ardal. Yn Adroddiad Capel Bethel ym 1944, dywedodd y Parch. Fred Jones yn ei anerchiad, 'Erbyn hyn derbyniwyd hysbysiad swyddogol fod ein cyfaill ifanc Jack Rodd Williams wedi marw. Llwyddodd rhai o'i awyren ddianc a gobeithiwyd iddo yntau wneud hefyd ond mae wedi ei gladdu yn yr Almaen.' Ym 1987 bu Côr Meibion Aberystwyth sydd yn cynnwys aelodau o Geulanamaesmawr ar daith yn yr Iseldiroedd a'r Almaen a medront ymweld â bedd Jack Rodd yn Reichwald, Kleve, yr Almaen. Cofia Goronwy Jones iddynt ganu emyn Cymraeg wrth y bedd yn ystod yr ymweliad, teyrnged briodol a gwefreiddiol i un o feibion Tal-y-bont.

Bu i Siarsiant David Williams, mab hynaf Mrs Williams, Penrhiw, a oedd gartref am gyfnod yn ystod Mai 1943, gael ei gymryd yn garcharor gan yr Almaenwyr pan gafodd ei awyren ddamwain tra'n gwasanaethu yn y Dwyrain Canol. Achubwyd ef gan Fyddin y Cynghreiriaid ond cafodd ei ladd 8 mis yn ddiweddarach dros diriogaeth y gelyn. Roedd yn 29 oed ac yn boblogaidd yn Nhal-y-bont. Cynhaliwyd Gwasanaeth Coffa iddo yn Nazareth gan y Parch. T.A. Williams

Yr Awyrlu Brenhinol

Gwasanaethodd Jim Williams a Dai Price Morgan yn yr awyrlu

Gyda lluoedd ac unedau yn cael eu symud mewn niferoedd mawr adeg rhyfel mae'n anghyffredin i gyfarfod yn ddisymwth â rhywun o'ch pentref eich hun, ond dyna'r lwc dda a ddaeth i ran David Price Morgan, Llety'r Gof a Jim Williams, Plas y Mynydd. Roedd David Price wedi ymuno ym 1939 ac wedi gwasanaethu gyda chriw

hoped that he had too but he lies buried in Germany.' In 1987 the Aberystwyth Male Voice Choir, with members from Ceulanamaesmawr, toured Holland and Germany and was able to visit Jack Rodd's grave in Reichwald, Kleve, Germany. Goronwy Jones, Glascoed recalls the choir singing a Welsh hymn at the grave-side during the visit, a moving and fitting tribute to one of Tal-y-bont's sons.

Sgt David Williams, eldest son of Mrs Williams of Penrhiw, was back home on leave in May 1943. Later, while serving in the Middle East, he was taken prisoner by the Germans when his plane crashed. He was rescued by the Allied Army advance only to die eight months later over enemy territory when he was 29 years old. He was a popular young man in Tal-y-bont and a Memorial Service was held at Nazareth Chapel by Rev. T.A. Williams

Royal Air Force

Jim Williams and Dai Price Morgan served in the RAF.

With the mass movement of troops and units that take place in wartime it was unusual to suddenly meet up with someone from your own village, but that was the good luck of David Price Morgan, Llety'r Gof and Jim Williams, Plas y Mynydd. David Price had joined up in 1939 and served in the RAF ground crew whilst Jim had been in the RAF as a pilot since before the start of the war. To their surprise they met on the airfield at Luneburg in Germany. Jim at that time was a Pilot Officer and his task that day was to fly a cargo of empty beer barrels to England in a captured German Junkers 88 transport plane.

Jim Williams also tells the story of how he 'buzzed' Tal-y-bont in a 'Mosquito' fighter-bomber and PC Evan-Vaughan wanted to report him, but as there is no report of the incident in the constable's notebook we must assume he had second thoughts.

Although there have been other, smaller conflicts



D.P. Morgan

daear yr Awyrlu Brenhinol tra bod Jim wedi bod yn yr Awyrlu fel peilot cyn dechrau'r rhyfel. Er mawr syndod iddynt buont gwrdd ar faes awyr Luneburg yn yr Almaen. Roedd Jim ar y pryd yn Swyddog Beilot a'i dasg y diwrnod hwnnw oedd hedfan cargo o fareli cwrw gwag i Loegr mewn awyren gludo Junkers 88 a gipiwyd oddi wrth yr Almaenwyr.

Mae Jim Williams yn dweud yr hanes hefyd am y tro yr hysiodd Tal-y-bont pan yn hedfan cad-awyren fomio 'Mosquito'. Roedd PC Evan-Vaughan am roi adroddiad amdano ond gan nad oes adroddiad o'r digwyddiad yn ei lyfr nodiadau rhaid derbyn ei fod wedi ail-feddwl am y peth.

Er bod brwydrau eraill wedi cymryd lle trwy'r byd, y rhyfel 1939-45 sydd wedi achosi y newidiadau mwyaf i'r pentref a'i ddiwylliant. Gwaetha'r modd mae bygythiad rhyfel niwclear yn bygwth dinasyddion a milwyr. Rydym yn byw mewn gobaith y daw'r mileniwm newydd â heddwch a challineb.

throughout the world, it is the war period of 1939-45 which caused the greatest changes to the village and its culture. Regretfully the huge threat of nuclear war hangs over civilian and soldier, so we live in hope that the new millennium brings peace and sanity.

Jim Hammonds

Jim Hammonds

