

# Research Proposal

By Laura Wing

## Introduction and Research Objectives

Through the periods of time we have witnessed military establishments evolve and diminish. World Wars and operations have determined the use of all the UK's military infrastructure within the world. Many of these locations/installations have now been decommissioned, whether they are still visibly there or have been regenerated for a different purpose. They still represent the history from these notable times.

With this in mind I plan to capture and document these military locations in their current state and whilst doing so I will also consider any decommissioned equipment or objects that were significant to that area and time. Through my project I hope to critically examine these locations through the eras, and their importance and role through political defence movements. I hope to research the political issues that can arise with regenerating or preserving an area that once had a military past and perhaps the reasons why they just get left to wither away instead.

## Development of Project

My project to date I have situated the location of interest to Northern Ireland. The province has seen a great involvement in world wars and the Northern Ireland troubles. I have researched archived images from the Ulster Aviation Society to grasp the geographical locations of military airfields and barracks. The archive images have also shaped my understanding of how the landscapes have changed through the time and what locations would be relevant for further research.

Currently in my practice as an RAF photographer I mostly capture documentary and photojournalism in a military photographic style. This project is an extension of my work focusing mainly on the history of military subjects and not just the present. Being in the military means I already have access to areas that are still owned by the ministry of defence, so far it has also helped me build relationships between organisations and other forces. Enabling me to obtain the necessary permissions for entry and the public release of images.

## Development of Project – RAF Long Kesh

The first area, in which my project took me to capture, was the former site of RAF

Long Kesh. The Ulster Aviation Society currently utilises the listed hangers, to showcase their extensive collection of aircraft. Some of these aircraft within the museum would have flown during these times of conflict within Northern Ireland.



The listed hangers were used in World War 2 and during the Northern Ireland troubles, with parts of derelict crew bar in the west of the hangar and communal ablutions are still standing. Most of the airfield from 1971 to 2000 was used by HM Prison Maze, which housed some of the paramilitary prisoners during the troubles. In 2006 parts of the prison were demolished however some of the H block hospital still remains, as it is a listed building. The airfield now holds the yearly Balmoral show on part of that site which would have been the original airfield.



It is still unclear what the future holds for the remaining prison, as politically there are still issues and on going talks. Politicians fear that if the prison had public access, it could possibly turn the hospital block into a shrine for paramilitaries and the past that happened there.

## Development of Project – RAF Aldergrove

involvement through various operations. RAF Aldergrove closed in 2009 and was



With the research archive, I was also able to identify RAF Aldergrove and its

taken over by Joint Helicopter Command, even though the area is still has a military purpose and involvement. The closure of the RAF station meant there was a major draw down of personnel, infrastructure and

equipment. It is visually possible to see the impact of the station drawdown and can be viewed today in such buildings like the workshops, housing and movements terminal. Ironically the older buildings such as the World War 2 hangars and the Nissan style huts are still being used, mostly only as storage as their condition worsens.

## Project Forecast

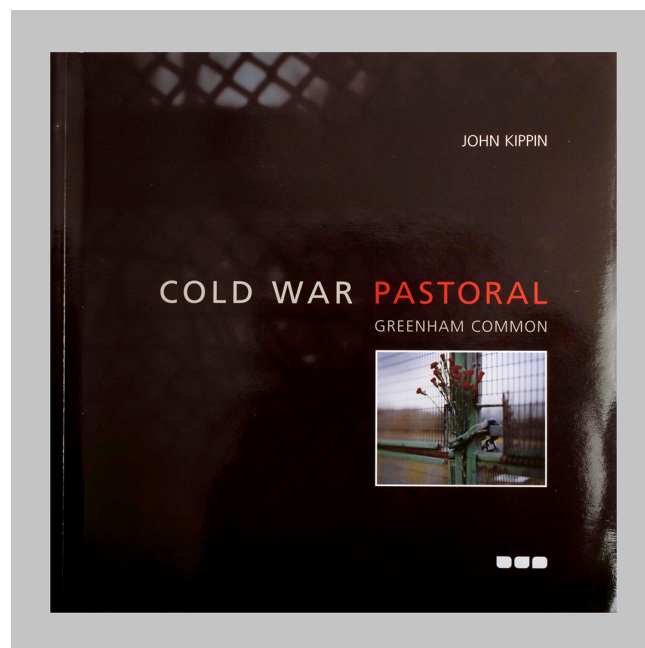
To obtain the best geographical perspective of all the areas within Northern Ireland, I intend to take aerial shots and complete a recce from the sky. This hopefully will enable me to identify possible airfields, infrastructure or obtain a visual of the layout of the regenerated area. I have approached the Police service of Northern Ireland to accompany them on an air sortie to locate these areas of interest. This has been agreed with an arrangement in January 2018 to capture these images. I have contacted the owner of a former monitoring bunker which was used by the Royal Observer Corps until they were stood down in 1991, this will be quite interesting to the project as it is in diversifies installations from RAF stations that I have previously captured. I hope to capture in the early part of module 2. I also have the contact details for RAF Langford Lodge that is currently owned by the company Martin-Barker, they deal with the testing of ejection sits. I have good knowledge from the Ulster Aviation Society, which used to be situated there that there is indeed hangars and an airfield that remains. I am awaiting an email back to confirm I can enter their site. Throughout the year I intend to remain proactive in researching other areas and looking to shoot at least one a month for new material. I hope by doing the aerial shoot first, it will determine if the journey on foot is worth a visiting. Ensuring that the location has interest and relevance to my project.

### Cost and Equipment

The only cost of the project will be the fuel to get to the destinations around Northern Ireland some of which are closer than others. As I am in the military I already have all the resources that I will need for the project such as camera equipment and an array of lenses, which I intend to utilise. I have also carried out extensive risk assessment to ensure ones safety at all times (see appendix A).

### Contextualisation

I have in counted many practitioners that have completed similar projects such as John Kippin with Cold War Pastoral, Greenham Common. John has documented through the times how the location was used. His project touches greatly on the political views associated with military defence, and the aftermath of how the space as been regenerated for public use. Many of these themes can be linked to my current project but I plan to use several different locations and address each one individually and then collectively, to form critical appreciation of their common links.



<http://johnkippin.com/publications.html>

In module 2 I plan to understand and digest the importance of David Company's Safety in numbness essay (Photoworks/Photoforum 2003 see appendix B). Here he discusses the increasing ubiquity of the medium 'late' photography "the aftermath of events-traces, fragments, empty buildings, empty streets, damage to the body and damage to the world?" Already I find my practice relates to this essay, by investigating his work I hope this will help to categorise and produce my final outcome of my project.



## Audience Appeal

I feel this project will appeal to quite a broad audience, with initially attracting people with a military connection or background. They possibly will be interested in the aftermath of the location. I will be capturing in a documentary style so that the viewer will have the greatest opportunity to create their own thoughts and personnel experiences to that location or object.

I will be bringing my project to Ulster Aviation Society, as they have already expressed interest in the aerial shots I have arranged. In study blocks 2 and 3 I plan to run workshops in photography basics, firstly to generate funding for travel expenses, but then to showcase my practice and project so far. Further into study block 2, I will be ensuring an up to date blog and gallery is kept. Documenting key points within my project, which will hopefully attract online viewers. By creating an online following this will help me gauge an understanding of interest and gather feedback from comments.

## Summary

As my project takes shape through the modules, I plan to capture a considerable amount of content. My research so far has predicted that there are many areas to investigate within Northern Ireland. My findings great or small, will certainly lead me to document military establishments and the areas that have been selected for regeneration, or have been left to crumble into the landscape.

I hope that I could bring attention to some sites as a type of topographic image. To remind people that some locations are worth preserving for the sake of history, no matter the political issue that could arise. Other military locations could benefit the surrounding communities, if they were regenerated and converted into public use.



# Appendix A

## MA Photography Risk Assessment form

**FALMOUTH**  
UNIVERSITY

|                             |  |                          |         |
|-----------------------------|--|--------------------------|---------|
| <b>Photographer's Name:</b> | Laura Wing   | <b>Date(s) of Shoot:</b> | Various |
| <b>Assistants' Names:</b>   | N/A  |                          |         |
| <b>Tutor / Supervisor:</b>  | Jesse Alexander, Stella Baraklianou  |                          |         |
| <b>Location:</b>            | Northern Ireland   |                          |         |
| <b>Description of work:</b> | Photographing various military sites within Northern Ireland. Approaching on foot and air in helicopter. |                          |         |

### Persons at Risk Identify all those at risk

|                  |  |                      |  |           |   |                |  |                |  |
|------------------|--|----------------------|--|-----------|---|----------------|--|----------------|--|
| Technical Staff: |  | Academic Staff:      |  | Students: | X | Admin Staff:   |  | Canteen Staff: |  |
| Contractors:     |  | General Public:      |  | Visitors: |   | Estates Staff: |  | Library Staff: |  |
| Cleaning Staff:  |  | Emergency Personnel: |  |           |   |                |  |                |  |

|        |  |                     |  |
|--------|--|---------------------|--|
| Other: |  | Especially at risk: |  |
|--------|--|---------------------|--|

| Check list          |         |                       |          |                      |     |                  |            |                    |         |
|---------------------|---------|-----------------------|----------|----------------------|-----|------------------|------------|--------------------|---------|
| Equipment           | YES     | Flash/tungsten        | YES      | Stands/tripods       | YES | Hot lights       | NO         | Smoke machine/fire | NO      |
| Flammable materials | NO      | Risk of Fire          |          | Welfare of Assistant |     | Welfare of model | N/A        | Working at Heights | YES     |
| Location            | VARIOUS | Transport to location | YES      | Parking              | YES | Vehicles/traffic | YES        | Weather conditions | VARIOUS |
| Public              | YES     | Confined spaces       | POSSIBLY | Derelict Buildings   | YES | Animals          | NO         | Children           | HELL NO |
| Tides               | NO      | Compressed Gasses     | NO       | Water                | NO  | Noise            | HELICOPTER | Chemicals          | NO      |

### PRIMARY RISK ASSESSMENT

#### Example

|               |   |                |   |
|---------------|---|----------------|---|
| <b>HAZARD</b> | What kind of hazards are there at the site or in your task? i.e. <b>Light stand</b> | <b>RISK OF</b> | What risks do those hazards create?<br>i.e. <b>Light stand falling over</b> |
|---------------|---|----------------|---|

|                        |  |                |   |
|------------------------|--|----------------|---|
| <b>HAZARD</b>          | Helicopter sortie  | <b>RISK OF</b> | In an event of a crash<br>Noise from helicopter |
| <b>CONTROL MEASURE</b> | Ensure safety brief is given before take off on current crash procedures from the PSNI<br>Ensure appropriate ear protection is worn through out flight |                |   |
| <b>HAZARD</b>          | Derelict buildings   | <b>RISK OF</b> | Injury do to falling parts of building          |
| <b>CONTROL MEASURE</b> | Ensure all correct PPE is worn whilst in and around building.<br>Ensure access to mobile phone at all times  |                |   |
| <b>HAZARD</b>          | Travelling in vehicle to sites   | <b>RISK OF</b> | Crash<br>Brake down of vehicle                  |
| <b>CONTROL MEASURE</b> | Ensure mobile phone is carried<br>Let someone know of travel details   |                |   |
| <b>HAZARD</b>          | Republicans through Northern Ireland   | <b>RISK OF</b> | Attack  |
| <b>CONTROL MEASURE</b> | Ensure the identify of personnel is not given<br>Have a convincing cover story of why you are in Northern Ireland                                      |                |   |
| <b>HAZARD</b>          |  | <b>RISK OF</b> |   |
| <b>CONTROL MEASURE</b> |  |                |   |
| <b>HAZARD</b>          |  | <b>RISK OF</b> |   |
| <b>CONTROL MEASURE</b> |  |                |   |

**On site risk assessment:** these are control measures that arose on your shoot

On my shoot at RAF Long Kesh, the building stairs had deteriorated somewhat. I ensured that I had a look out to watch the stairs as I approached the top.

**Emergency Information and Procedures**

|                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Phone</b>                       | Charged mobile phone always carried   |
| <b>Medical Expertise</b>           | First Aid qualified   |
| <b>Emergency Procedure</b>         | In the event of an emergency dial 999 or 112 ensure that you or someone with you can accurately describe where you are (ideally nearest postcode) |
| <b>Medical Treatment</b>           | Minor Injuries Unit, Falmouth Hospital Open weekdays 8am to 8pm<br>A&E Treliske Hospital, Truro, Open 24 hours                                    |
| <b>Evacuation procedures</b>       | Ambulance can evacuate from main road.  |
| <b>Incident/accident reporting</b> | All incidents or accidents should be reported to tutor at Falmouth University   |

**Assessment carried out by**

- I have ensured that I have reviewed the hazards and risks associated with this project and taken necessary steps to remove hazards where possible or reduced the risks associated with the remaining hazards to a minimum.
- I have recorded the main hazards, risks and control measures in this document.
- I have ensured that those working with me have been briefed on the nature of the tasks they are to perform, and are aware of the hazards associated with the task and the measures in place to reduce the risks associated with those hazards. (if applicable)
- I will continually assess hazards and risks 'live' on site to ensure that nothing has been overlooked or has changed since initial assessment.

Signed: WING

Date: 15 DEC 17

**Assessment reviewed by**



# Appendix B

## Bibliography

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/troubles>

<http://ulsteraviationsociety.org/>

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern\\_ireland/6279442.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/6279442.stm)

<https://www.raf.mod.uk/rafaldergrove/>

<http://johnkippin.com/publications.html>

<http://davidcampany.com/safety-in-numbness/>

All images photographed by Laura Wing

Research Proposal - Word count 1428