Case Study

Name: Andrew
Served with: Royal Engineers
Company: Siemens
Role: Signalling Design Engineer

NTAR
NATIONAL TRAINING
ACADEMY FOR RAIL

"What you've learnt and honed during your time in the military is directly relatable to the Railway in every role. It's just not easy to see at first."

I joined the British Army as a Royal Engineer on the 10th March 2003. In the first year I completed basic Infantry, Combat engineering and communications training before deploying in the field Army. During my time in the field Army from 2004 – 2013 I specialised as a Communication Systems Engineer and in the Explosive Ordnance Disposal field. In particular as a Search team Second in Command (locating Improvised Explosive Devices) as well as a number of engineering projects. I completed 3 tours of operation, twice in Afghanistan and once in Iraq. I've also been on exercise in countries around the world such as Belize, Canada and Kenya to name a few.

My last post was as a military instructor at a training Regiment teaching potential search teams various procedures and equipment techniques. I left as a substantive Corporal after 12 years' service in August 2015.

Since leaving I applied and was successful in gaining a place on the Military2Rail scheme as a Trainee Signalling Design Engineer in November 2015. The Military2Rail scheme was a 6 week training course that provided the participants a flavour of Railway signalling. During the course the learning curve was quite steep however it was delivered very similar to how a military course is run. So the course participants were more than capable of keeping up. Also the Railway loves abbreviations just like the military so you needed to flush out those pretty quick! On successful completion you were guaranteed employment in your applied for role at a location you previously selected. Mine was Manchester.
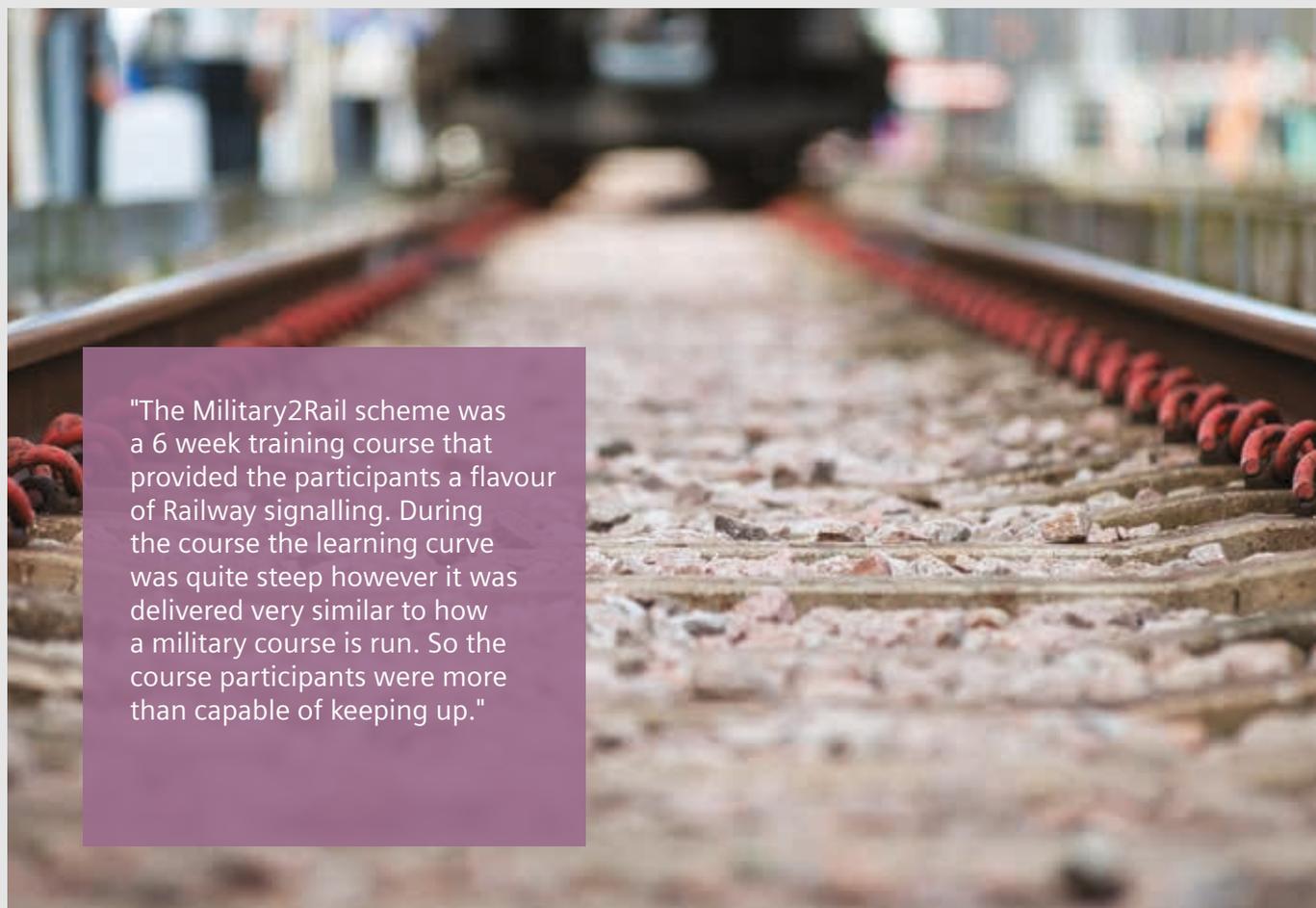
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I arrived in the Manchester office in January 2016 to start life as a trainee Signalling Design Engineer. Everyone was very welcoming and helpful but after a few months I started to become agitated from being stuck at my desk from 9-5. I had a conversation with an ex RAF member who's the Lead Project Engineering Manager for Manchester about how I was getting on. I told him the truth and he thought I would be better served, with the skills I had developed in my time during the Army and immediately afterwards (I trained in Cisco Network technologies), to join his team and specifically work in delivering Signalling Networks. I accepted his invitation and have been doing the role since May 2016.

There are a number of buzz words you will have heard, whether you have left the forces or not, about what skills ex-military bring to the table. Things like time management, discipline, integrity, self-motivated, work under pressure, leadership skills, work as a team member and enthusiasm to learn new skills. This is just to name a few. It might seem a bit of a cliché but it is true!

I thoroughly believe that I apply these traits in my current role on a daily basis. What I am trying to say is: "what you've learnt and honed during your time in the military is directly relatable to the Railway in every role. It's just not easy to see at first."

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