

**Name:** James

**Served with:** Royal Navy

**Company:** South Western Railway

**Current Role:** Technical Assistant

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I had served in the Royal Navy for 14 years, having joined in July 2004 when I was 19 years old as an air engineer. Following a promotion in 2009, I completed a 14 month HNC Aeronautical Engineering and Leadership course and was deployed overseas, serving in the Gulf, the Falklands and the Caribbean. Here, as an Aeronautical Engineer, I was responsible for the maintenance of the electrical and radar systems on the aircraft as part of a team of 8 in a supervisory role.

Having married in 2009, living away from home became an increasing challenge and I was keen to find a job closer to home. I began teaching new air engineer recruits only 10 miles from home and found that this gave my career a new lease of life. This new found enthusiasm for my career led to me wanting increased home-life stability and the potential to better myself – which would mean leaving the military. Leaving was a difficult decision as I had been offered a further promotion, but this would mean living away from home and further deployments overseas.

My decision to join the Rail industry was the result of a recommendation from a few former ex-military colleagues. I attended (National Training Academy for Rail) NTAR's Step Into Rail open day. Prior to this event, I was not sure how I could transfer my skills and did not have a clear resettlement career path. However, the impressive facilities and welcoming atmosphere on the open day, as well as the clear indication that ex-forces personnel were valued and that our skills were needed, led me to focus on the Rail industry as my primary goal.

**Continued overleaf >>**

I felt that I was the perfect fit for the Rail industry. My engineering understanding, as well as the attitude and discipline I learnt from my experiences in the Royal Navy, were directly transferable. Following a presentation, delivered by Jennifer Walpole at NTAR, about a pilot scheme for a new Traction and Rolling Stock qualification, I completed an application form and I was offered a position on the course.

The course was brilliant, with engaging and dedicated teachers, and fantastic, innovative, training methods. It was the first course where I felt enthusiastic and genuinely interested in what was being taught. Having come from a training background in the military, I was impressed with the state-of-the-art facilities; including the VR headsets, touch screen computers, and workshop complete with mock ups of every part of the train to practice with.

I felt that there were no limits on the lengths which the team would go to in order to ensure we were well taught. Additionally, I appreciated the welcoming environment and being greeted every day with a smile, which made my transition into a civilian environment a very comfortable one.

Throughout my time on the course I actively sought a job, making use of LinkedIn to gain valuable networks with former colleagues and potential recruiters, as well as putting in time on job-search websites. I was eager for the security that guaranteed employment would give me, and South Western Railway was recommended to me as an employer, by an ex-navy colleague.

I managed to secure an interview with South Western Railway on the Monday immediately following my final Friday at NTAR. I was very well prepared for my interview as the NTAR training team was extremely supportive, with NTAR trainer Jordan Fuller even practicing my 10 minute presentation with me ahead of the interview.

The interview was a success and I was employed as a Technical Assistant at South Western Railway in Bournemouth, a role in which I am the sole depot technical trainer, responsible for the training of maintenance staff, from apprentices to high level technical staff, as well as inductions, health and safety and depot track safety training.

I would thoroughly recommend the NTAR Qualifications in Traction and Rolling Stock Engineering to fellow military personnel leaving the forces. I found it very beneficial for my transition to the Rail industry, providing excellent use of my skills and engineering background to enable my successful resettlement. I have developed and gained confidence in my skills, and I have found my perfect job which I am keen to persist with throughout my career.

I left the Navy on the 8th May 2018 and began my job in the Rail industry on the 21st May.

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