

My journey from armed forces to Team Leader by **Jamie Cunningham-Smith**



My advice to someone leaving the armed forces is to find your strength and use it in everyday life.



When I left the Army, my transfer to civilian life was very up and down as I had no idea what I wanted to do – all I knew was I had a set of skills, but I didn't know what to use them for apart from working in the security sector – something most ex-forces personnel undertake.

From there, I moved on to agency work, which ranged from glass cutting to working in the laundry and then labouring on building sites. I knew from the latter that I wanted to work outside; I enjoy being outdoors, but I left school with very few qualifications as I joined the army at 16. The years passed and I carried on labouring, but I finally landed an agency role on the Cardiff Welsh Opera House project as an agency electrical labourer for NG Bailey, undertaking general site duties.

After a year, I was employed permanently, and my next job took me to Liberty Stadium, Swansea, to manage the mechanical and electrical stores. I had to learn the job very quickly and ensure that tasks were completed on time and in the correct manner. My time in the armed forces really helped with this, as we had to take snap orders, remember them, and deliver them the first time.

My next job saw me take on just the mechanical aspect of the role and I found real enjoyment in this as I became more involved with the practical side of the role. It was here that I used my army background to help me learn new things quickly and then I could take on more jobs individually.

After 20 years with the company, I got promoted to Team Leader and this is my current role. I love my job, but I am still learning new things every day.

My advice to someone leaving the armed forces is to find their strength and use it in everyday life. My main transferable skill from the armed forces was timekeeping. I was in the Welsh Guards, and we had to be seven minutes early for every parade, and I keep to this standard in my life. That and getting up before my alarm goes off every day, without fail.

I am still involved with the armed forces as a reservist, and NG Bailey supports me with this and allows me time away from work when it is required.