

INZIT^o

From Deployment into Employment

Transitioning from the Battlefield to the Boardroom

July 2018

THE INZIT^o PARTNERSHIP

www.inzito.com ◆ +44 (0)20 3327 2030 ◆ 35 Grosvenor Street, London W1K 4QX

 A MEMBER OF
ALTOPARTNERS

- ∞ Introduction
- ∞ The current perception of the armed forces in the UK
- ∞ What are veterans' core skills and experiences?
 - ∞ Leadership
 - ∞ Team work and culture
 - ∞ Communication
 - ∞ Change, improvisation and flexibility
 - ∞ Project and programme management
- ∞ Making the transition
 - ∞ Effectiveness of resettlement training
 - ∞ When to make the transition?
 - ∞ Confidence in making the transition
 - ∞ Managing expectations of service leavers
 - ∞ Obstacles to a successful transition
 - ∞ Consulting career and Non-Executive Directorship
- ∞ How are things changing as we move forward?
 - ∞ Current initiatives
 - ∞ The use of Reserves and flexible working
 - ∞ Industry interaction
 - ∞ Comparisons to other nations
 - ∞ How the recruitment industry can help
- ∞ Conclusions
- ∞ Acknowledgements

Introduction

The United Kingdom has one the oldest and well-established armed forces in the world with traditions spanning centuries. However, as society has evolved so has the military in both its purpose and its positioning within the social conscience. In the digital age, the activities of the armed forces have become much more visible and therefore the public's perception has undergone a gradual transformation. The armed forces as a career is also changing with almost all veterans now obliged to find a second career after their military service is over.

All of this is taking place against a backdrop of a reduction in the overall headcount of the armed forces and therefore the civilian job market is beginning to see an ever increasing number of veterans competing for commercial jobs. However, if the popular media were to be believed, veterans are being habitually barred from job opportunities. But beyond the hysteria and hyperbole of tabloid headlines, what is the actual state of the market for people coming out of the armed forces? Are they prepared for job hunting? Do employers understand what value military personnel can bring?

At a very high level, this paper will examine some of these basic premises to ascertain what are the prevailing attitudes and preconceptions of the commercial sector, and the experience of those who have made the transition from the armed forces.

This is a paper based on interviews with veterans and HR leaders supported by secondary research from multiple sources. The objective is to answer some key questions:

- ∞ What is the current perception of individuals who are coming out of the armed forces with regards to employability?
- ∞ What are the core skills that veterans could bring to the commercial sector?
- ∞ How effective are the mechanisms for individuals making that transition?
- ∞ How are things changing as we move forward?

Inherently the answers to these questions will prompt a further one: what more could be done? In particular, what more could the recruitment industry do.

The first portion of this paper looks at service leavers as a whole, but will then focus on those looking to transition to senior management and executive appointments.

PERCEPTIONS

Public perception of the Armed Forces

Over recent decades the public perception of the military has been in a near-state of continuous evolution from perilous lows such as during the Northern Ireland ‘Troubles’ to a resurgence in more recent years following Iraq and Afghanistan. However, appreciation does not automatically equate to understanding. Whilst there is a fairly well-engrained public image of the military (soldiers on the frontline and returning home parades); there is a shockingly poor understanding amongst the public about what the armed forces actually do for the nation as a whole or *how* they operate.

The ignorance of the populace at large (and thence potential civilian employers) about the military is in some instances quite breath taking and unfortunately grounded almost entirely on the stereotypes purported in movies and the like. Part of the issue lies in the fact that many of the military’s activities (except frontline operations) are simply not visible. Such work includes: defending UK air and maritime limits from potentially hostile forces; protecting British trade worldwide; counter-terrorism (including cyber-attacks); counter-narcotic, -piracy and –trafficking; humanitarian relief; protecting British overseas dependencies; nuclear deterrent; NATO commitments; and, supporting civilian emergency services.

What cannot be denied is the overall increase in the awareness of the armed forces and to a large degree this has been driven by the great success of campaigns to support wounded veterans. The Invictus Games (with Prince Harry’s patronage) and Help for Heroes, to name but two, have gained both national and international notoriety.



The Duke of Sussex speaking at the opening ceremony of the 2017 Invictus Games in Toronto

PERCEPTIONS

During more recent years the armed forces have gained more public exposure as part of the UK's fight against terrorism. With a number of atrocities happening on British soil, the military have been part of the response such as the activation of Operation TEMPERER which, for the first time in over a decade, saw armed troops on UK streets. This has brought the armed forces more into the public eye.



A member of the Irish Guards is deployed on the streets of London alongside the Metropolitan Police as part of Operation TEMPERER in 2017

The popular press have, on the whole, been very supportive of the armed forces in recent times, especially with regards to wounded veterans. However, when examining press reports it should always be remembered that a newspaper's number one objective is to sell copies. Therefore, there can often be a temptation towards sensationalism (particularly among the 'red tops') which in the case of veterans manifests itself in articles about homeless and unemployed ex-soldiers fighting prejudice at every turn. Given such evocation, there is a danger the reader will assume this is a universal problem.

Army veteran, 46, who served in the Gulf and Afghanistan is spotted at a roundabout with a 'job wanted' poster after failing with 400 applications

- Wayne Taylor was paid £45,000 while with the 26th Regiment Royal Artillery
- He fought in both Gulf wars and led hundreds of men in Afghanistan and Kosovo
- Now the only jobs the ex-sergeant can get pay little above minimum wage

By LARA KEAY FOR MAILONLINE

PUBLISHED: 15:25, 25 September 2017 | UPDATED: 16:17, 26 September 2017



A former sergeant major who fought in both Gulf wars and was paid £45,000 stood by a roundabout with a 'job wanted' sign after 400 failed applications.

Wayne Taylor signed up for the army aged just 16 and served for 25 years in **Afghanistan**, Bosnia, Kosovo and Northern Ireland, as well as both Gulf wars.

The 46-year-old's salary was £45,000 when he left the 26th Regiment Royal Artillery in December 2011, but now all he can find is minimum wage jobs.

Frustrated over his 400 failed job applications, he resorted to drastic measures and stood at the entrance to Chester Business Park with a placard saying 'Job wanted. Educated to degree level. Speak to me please'.

Scroll down for video



Wayne Taylor (pictured) resorted to drastic measures after failing to get 400 jobs he applied for. The 46-year-old stood outside the entrance to Chester Business Park with a sign reading 'Job wanted. Educated to degree level. Speak to me please' in a bid to get an offer

SAS veteran Colin Maclachlan highlights challenges military personnel face when returning home

Written by Murray Scougall, 03 April 2018



Former Royal Scot and member of the elite SAS Colin Maclachlan has struggled to get work (Ryan McNamara)

AFTER returning to Civvy Street, battle-hardened soldier Colin Maclachlan applied for 1000 jobs.

He didn't get one. He didn't even get an interview.

The former Royal Scot and member of the elite SAS says his experience is too common and underlines the challenges facing military personnel returning home.

News

Veterans 'face job discrimination due to misplaced PTSD fears'

One-in-10 veterans says they have been quizzed by interviewers about PTSD CREDIT: HEATHCLIFF O'MALLEY

Discrimination against armed forces could become illegal

Cross-party talks aim to protect former members of the military and ease transition into civilian jobs after redundancies

Are recruiters doing enough to help ex-military personnel into work?

Wed, 10 Jan 2018 | News | Beckett Frith

Recruiters and employers are falling to value military experience when it comes to placing ex-forces personnel in civilian roles, according to Stuart Tootal, Head of the Barclays Armed Forces Transition, Employment & Resettlement (AFTER) Programme.

News

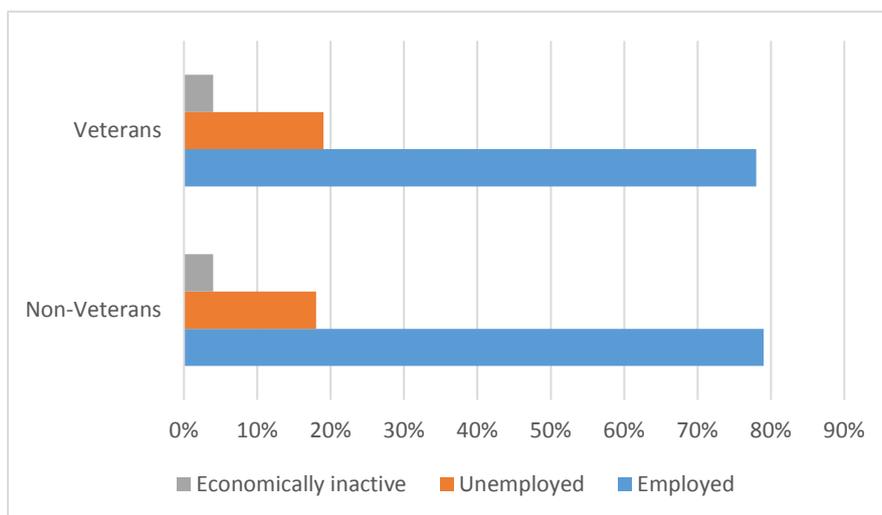
'Are you a killer?' The quiet discrimination shutting military veterans out of the workplace



The Royal Welch Fusiliers in action in Basra, Iraq, in 2004

PERCEPTIONS

For a more objective understanding of the veteran landscape, we can examine the statistics that the government collects annually about veterans¹. When once compares the employment figures it actually transpires there is virtually no difference between veterans and non-veterans. Whilst 78% of non-veterans were in employment, 77% of veterans were similarly classified.



There is however a moot point when considering these figures and that is the differentiation between employment and ‘suitable employment’.

Whilst an individual might be in a salaried role and thus count as ‘employed’ statistically, that does not take into account whether that employment is equivalent or relevant to that individual’s skill set of experience level. One part of the veteran argument is that those coming out of the armed forces have to accept roles that are substantially below the level of their capabilities, as this is all they are able to secure.

¹ Ministry of Defence (MoD). *Annual Population Survey: UK Armed Forces Veterans residing in the UK*. 2016.

SKILLS & EXPERIENCES

Leadership

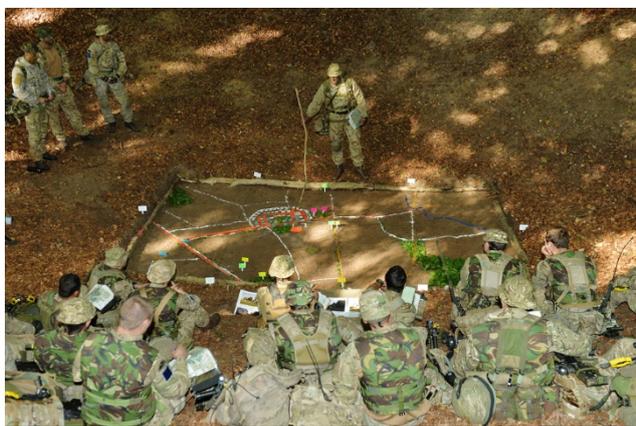
Perhaps one of the most important skills that the armed forces develop within its people is that of leadership. This needs to exist at all levels and ranks. The military takes a very structured approach to its leadership training and indeed members of the armed forces spend considerably larger portions of their career in training than those in the civilian world. This is done in part because they have the resources for such training, but also out of necessity as the military cannot recruit from the outside market and therefore are dependent entirely on internal talent. This is unknown in the commercial world.

The nature of military leadership is one of the most misconstrued stereotypes about the armed forces. More often than not this stereotype of leadership consists almost entirely of shouting, screaming and shoving. The truth could not be any more different. Leadership in the armed forces is grounded on the concept of 'Value Based Leadership' which is a simple tenant of uniting a team of people around one or a set of shared objectives.

Businesses will look to encapsulate this collective goal in a snappy mission statement dressed up by a brand agency; but the reality is they are doing nothing original. The entire concept of a mission statement is taken (not very subtly) from the military who look to frame their objectives as part of an overall strategy.

“My own definition of leadership is this: ‘the capacity and the will to rally men and women to a common purpose and the character which inspires confidence’”

**Field Marshal
Bernhard
Montgomery**



A platoon commander of the Parachute Regiment briefs his men as part of Exercise Active Eagle {Crown Copyright}

Perhaps one of the greatest skills that a military leader can bring is the ability to motivate a group of people to achieve these goals. In a corporate world of increasingly decentralised and flattened organisation structures, a much greater emphasis is placed on influence – but how many executives are schooled in the technique? Very few – most learn it as they go along.

SKILLS & EXPERIENCES

Of course, one of the counter-arguments to the military leadership doctrine is that it can potentially ‘institutionalise’ its practitioners. This is not without foundation. Many of those who serve for an extended period of time in the armed forces, and especially those who joined at an early age, will know of few other ways to conduct leadership and management of people. Thus there is an inherent degree of inflexibility which will put a number of potential civilian employers off them.



Active understanding of, and engagement with, leadership during education can give graduates an edge in today's job market

Teamwork and culture

In tandem with leadership is the essential ability to work as part of an effective team and this is one of the unifying facets across every branch of the armed forces and at every level. Thus, a considerable amount of time and resources is spent on learning and developing effective team work methodologies. This has an obvious benefit for those looking to employ from the armed forces.

A number of participants commented on the ease with which veterans were able to settle into teams and indeed, their arrival and work ethos often brought renewed impetus and drive. Key traits that were identified by those interviewed include:

- ∞ An innate desire to finish the job;
- ∞ Commitment to the outcome and not just process;
- ∞ Maturity;
- ∞ Flexibility;
- ∞ Resilience.

“Oppo first, team second, self last”
**‘The Commando Spirit’,
 Royal Marines**

SKILLS & EXPERIENCES



New Entries in the Royal Navy learn about effective team work, such as in the Damage Repair Instructional Unit (DRIU) – “Havoc”

When one considers the issues with school-leaver employability; these traits become all the more attractive. Indeed, a recent CBI survey² showed that schools are not equipping all young people with the skills they need to succeed in the workplace. Businesses were not satisfied with their skills in communication (50%) or self-management (48%). Two areas veterans typically excel in.

Communication

The ability to absorb information and communicate it to a wide audience in an effective and constructive manner is one of the core skills in the military; especially at the senior officer grade where Staff College training is particularly effective. The ability to ‘brief to effect’ is an element highlighted by a number of interviewees.

“Communication without intelligence is noise; intelligence without communication is irrelevant”

General Alfred M. Gray Jr USMC

One of the core needs that many organisations look for when hiring senior executives is the ability to communicate across an organisation – both up, down and across. Building effective working relationships at all levels is more important than ever in the commercial environment and the ability to influence is crucial.

Another important facet to be bore in mind is that senior officers in the military don’t just communicate with each other, but also to government both at home and abroad. The latter can come about through their assistance in humanitarian relief operations or counter-narcotic missions to name but two examples. They also work with businesses on new equipment procurement and service tendering contracts. When one considers the broader corporate environment; namely one geared towards flatter and more simplistic organisational structures where traditional fixed lines of reporting and

² CBI. *The Right Combination: CBI/Pearson Education & Skills Survey*. 2016.

SKILLS & EXPERIENCES

removed; the need to be a flexible and effective communicator are only increasing in importance.

Change, improvisation and flexibility

The ability to adapt to a continuously changing and unpredictable environment is a core discipline in the armed forces. In preparing to serve in a battlefield, disaster zone or area of civil unrest, there is little that can be accurately predicted and therefore a certain degree of dexterity and agility is essential. As is often quoted: “no plan survives contact with the enemy”.

The commercial world of today with its technological enablement and real-time information means that the business landscape is a continually shifting one. Companies today are spending ever increasing amounts of money on training their existing staff in agile thinking; and ever more time in screening potential hires for adaptability.

“I don’t care what anything was designed to do; I care about what it can do”

Gene Kranz, NASA Flight Director and US Air Force pilot



Heath Robinson At Work. *During the Falklands Conflict of 1982, Surgeon-Commander Rick Jolly (right) commanded the medical teams at Ajax Bay. With minimal equipment, he and his team transformed a derelict meat-processing plant into a fully functional triage and surgical centre treating both Argentine and British casualties despite two unexploded bombs hitting the facility. There were zero fatalities among the British wounded admitted to his care. Surgeon-Commander Jolly remains the only British serviceman to have been decorated by both sides in a conflict.*

SKILLS & EXPERIENCES

Project and Programme Management

Throughout the interviews, it was consistently pointed to that programme and project management are natural civilian routes for those coming out of the mid-to-senior officer grades. Programme/ project managers are in great demand in the UK economy and it is a transferable skill across numerous sectors.

Skills, such as scheduling, negotiating, risk and contract management are expertise many senior officers will accrue during their postings, especially in the MoD and post-Staff College.

The planning aspect is something that is particularly important and the armed forces place a lot of emphasis on enabling its people to convert ideas into actionable plans. However, a cautionary note should be struck as senior officers in particular, whilst formulating strategy, are often doing this in response to initiatives or proposals from government and therefore consideration for idea generation should be taken into account.



84 Medical Squadron, 9 Regiment, Royal Logistical Corp were winners of the Extreme Logistics Category at the European Supply Chain Excellence Awards.

Effectiveness of Resettlement training

Overall the quality of Resettlement training in conjunction with the Career Transition Partnership (CTP) is generally held to be good. The course covers the fundamentals of job hunting to a good degree in terms of CV and cover letter writing coupled with a rudimentary understanding of the recruitment/ executive search world.

However, there is a lack of training in some of the ‘softer skills’ that most will need to find a job and be successful in that role. Skills such as how to build and maintain an effective network for example barely featured in Resettlement training according to many interviewed. The most successful service leavers are those who have meticulously plotted their route and identified the key people they need to know in commercial companies.

There was also a general sense of a need for a refreshed approach to the way Resettlement works. Many likened their methods as akin to an old-fashioned recruitment agency, with CVs being touted around the market with little strategy or forethought. There needs to be much more planning for a service person’s transition and pragmatic thinking about how to interact with industry effectively. Many also felt the Resettlement process needed to start much earlier in a person’s transition.

When to make the transition?

Deciding when to make to leave the armed forces has a pronounced impact on the trajectory of the individual’s subsequent career and has been a source of much debate. The one area of consensus among those interviewed is that almost without exception, service leavers will need to undertake a second career of some description.

Typically there are three points at which an officer will leave the armed forces: at the relatively junior grades; mid-level senior; and, senior officer. The first and third of these groups enjoy relatively successful transitions; however, it is the middle group of mid-level officers where the greater difficulty lies. This is demonstrated in the table that follows. In essence, those leaving at this level will be too far in their career to ‘start again’, but won’t have reached the level where the weight of their seniority could bring them straight into senior roles. They fall between two stools.

Of course, this is a fairly rudimentary simplification, but does act as guide to this particular issue.

TRANSITION



- ∞ More likely to move into an 'advisory' role in the commercial world. Possible a specialised NED.
- ∞ Experience of leading major organisations, strategic decision-making and managing relationships at governmental and ExCo level.
- ∞ Will have a degree of public notoriety which some companies would welcome on their Boards.



- ∞ Major loss of talent to the UK economy from this group.
- ∞ Will have had experience of reasonably high level of leadership but won't have sat 'at the top table' or had the strategic exposure more senior ranks will have had.
- ∞ Unable to 'start again' and therefore need to engineer a side-ways move.



- ∞ Trained in a relatively 'tactical' level of leadership, managing small teams and projects.
- ∞ Will be at a stage where they can compete directly with similarly experienced individuals in the commercial world.
- ∞ Retain a high level of 'learning threshold' and thus seen as lower risk.

Confidence in making the transition

In general, many of those who have served in the armed forces will be confident in nature. This is not surprising given the roles they will have served in. But beyond that, the more important issue is that many will have spent a long time in the military and to many the services represent a metaphorical, if not literal, home.

Therefore, to leave this 'bubble' where perhaps individuals have always lived in barracks or married quarters; the administration of pension and benefits was always handled; and the question of the next job was not necessarily your responsibility but your Appointer's – stepping into the commercial world of CVs, assessment days, competition and psychometrics can be as daunting as any battlefield.

Many of those spoken to as part of this research indicated that their confidence was badly shaken once the reality of job-hunting came to bear. Some found that taking a deliberate time-out for 'decompression' was incredibly effective and this helped sustain a healthy level of confidence during their search.

It is therefore crucial that service leavers are properly prepared for the search process. Part of that is managing their expectations of what they will find outside of the military.

Managing expectations of Service Leavers

Many of those leaving the armed forces have been found to have unrealistic expectations of both the type of role they could do in the commercial sector, as well as the level of seniority. Some of the common misconceptions are founded through interpreting skills and experiences inaccurately.

For instance many will equate a programme management role in the military as being akin to owning a P&L and thus will aspire to a Managing Director or General Manager position. In reality, owning a budget is completely different to owning a P&L and there is little chance of someone walking straight into that sort of role from a programme background.

The other expectation that must be managed or given guidance on is the time and effort that will be required in the job hunt. There are some instances of service leavers simply expecting the phone to ring or a couple of cover letters to suffice. The reality is that job hunting is actually a full time occupation in its own right. One of the most crucial aspects is networking and cultivating their own contacts – this is a time consuming, but very beneficial activity.

Obstacles to a successful transition

Beyond the public perception of the armed forces that have already been discussed, one of the crucial areas for education is the 'language' that is used by service personnel to describe what they have done in their career. Many of those spoken to in this research commented that many military CVs read like automated statements. There is no mention of what a person actually did, or what they achieved. There is a need for much greater education in this regard and it is beginning to be addressed in Resettlement training.

At a more senior level, one common concern is about whether military leaders will have the commerciality or financial awareness to be effective. Indeed, there is little education in Resettlement in business finance or learning the way around a balance sheet. That said, most individuals at this level are of the

calibre that they can quickly learn this. But many interviewees felt that some dedicated financial training in Resettlement would be of enormous value.

Consulting career and Non-Executive Directorships

Many of those leaving the armed forces move into a consulting career, often based on their specialty in the military. As this suggests, this is more prosperous for those with particular skills; whereas is perhaps less applicable for 'generalists' such as those coming out of the infantry. Many have prospered in such positions but a note of warning is that after a relatively short time doing such roles one is liable to be 'pigeon-holed' in their particular sector and so serious consideration should be given before embarking on this path.

One of the biggest areas of disagreement amongst those interviewed for this paper is whether those leaving the services at a senior officer rank could move directly into a Plc Non-Executive Director role.

There are some who feel that the governance and financial management of a large organisation is too much for someone to move directly into. Others feel that those with specific industry and/ or functional expertise could make a successful transition (such as logistics or cyber for example) and indeed there are a number of individuals within the FTSE as an example of this.

One interesting point that was raised during this research is whether the armed forces could be a potential contributor for helping with diversity on Boards. On gender diversity for example, the armed forces have been encouraging women to see the services as a long term career and indeed many have moved into senior leadership roles within the military with core professional skills. Examples would be Major General Susan Ridge (a qualified solicitor) and Air Vice Marshal Elaine West (previously Director of Projects and Programme Delivery). As all companies (and headhunters) look to satisfy diversity commitments on Boards and think more pragmatically, is this a pool that thus far has been overlooked?

MOVING FORWARD

Current initiatives

The Armed Forces Covenant was introduced in 2000 and this research shows that companies take it very seriously. Those interviewed were almost unanimous in the view that the Covenant is certainly helping the cause of veteran transition, but that it could go further and more could be done.



Of increasing prominence in the UK are military recruitment schemes with large firms such as Barclays, Deloitte and JP Morgan all having dedicated programmes. At the moment these schemes are mainly restricted to the big corporates but they are demonstrating that there is a considerable pool of talent that can be tapped into and that veterans can make incredibly effective transitions.

Whilst many firms will not have a dedicated programme, they do already operate a number of key aspects that make them successful. One of the most important that many contributors identified was the existence of an internal network for former military personnel. The success of female and LGBT networks show the benefits of such organisations. Many companies also have a 'buddy' scheme for new joiners from the military where they are paired with another veteran whom they can go to for advice.

The use of Reserves and flexible working

For most of their history, the Reserve forces have been used mainly as a way of plugging gaps in the regular military. It is only in recent years however that the way this pool of resources has started to be used in a different way, driven by the 'Whole Force Approach' conceptualised in the 2015 Strategic Defence & Security Review (SDSR).



Reservists Day. Members of the Reserve Forces are encouraged to wear their uniforms in their civilian jobs for the day.

The benefit to the Regular armed forces is seen in providing greater flexibility for these personnel too, especially when

MOVING FORWARD

planning for large or prolonged deployments. The MoD is also increasing its efforts to make transferring between the Regulars and Reserves much easier. Project Firefly for example is the Royal Navy's effort in this regard which offers 'seamless transfer' for service leavers to join the Maritime Reserve within two years. In addition to reservist pay for these individuals, there is the opportunity to accrue additional pension benefits. Equally, there are greater opportunities for reservists to undertake Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS) appointments, some of which can extend for up to four years.

Industry interaction

There is an increasing embrace of using placements of military personnel into defence companies in recent years. Admittedly the primary purpose is to lend specific expertise on certain projects, but a by-product is that the individual is getting a first-hand experience of life in a commercial organisation.

Another concept, in slightly earlier stages, is to provide civilian contractors with the opportunity to experience the work of the armed forces, such as going to sea in a warship and actually seeing where and how the products they make for the Royal Navy are actually used. This sharing of knowledge, insight and experience will not only improve the working relationship between the two parties, but will also provide an understanding of the working practices which can only aid the transition of the service leavers into civilian work.

There have also been commentaries and discussion about whether direct recruitment into the armed forces could become a reality. Whilst a little far away, there are some specialist areas (such as cyber warfare) where there is a need for immediate expertise at a senior level.

Home · News

Army to break with tradition and recruit civilians into senior ranks



The Sovereign's Parade at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. CREDIT: PAUL GROVER

MOVING FORWARD

Comparison to other nations

The scope of this paper has been deliberately limited in the first instance to focus on the UK, but certainly a much better understanding will be gained when comparisons are made with how other nations are faring with the issue. One of the objectives off the back of this paper is to partner with our US affiliate office and contrast the fortunes of US veterans against those of UK veterans.

Whilst that research will form the basis of further work and publications, even a cursory look at the markets can provide evidence of the chasm that exists between the two. In the US the standing of veterans is inimitably higher than in Britain with former service personnel given preferential treatment in many avenues of everyday life. The phrase “thank you for serving our country” is almost always the response to discovering an individual was in the military. One can contrast that to the sad instance in Peterborough in 2008 of RAF personnel verbally abused for wearing their uniform in public. It can scarcely be imagined this happening in the US.



Jobs and employment likewise is the polar opposite in the US when drawing comparisons with Britain. In the US, veterans are not only treated equally when applying for jobs but frequently given preference. The long running of Veterans Jobs and Resources Fairs are again testament to the willingness to employ those transitioning out of the military. Thousands will

MOVING FORWARD

attend a fair in a single day; many will leave with interviews or job offers.

How the recruitment industry can help

As headhunters our role is to look beyond the obvious and really understand what it is a candidate can do and crucially what value they could add to our clients. Gone are the days when we should simply be looking at job titles or poaching from ‘the usual suspects’. If our industry is to move beyond the ‘CV-touting recruiter’ image to that of a trusted adviser and consultant to companies on the subject of talent management, then we have to think and act more pragmatically and creatively.

We can take this approach and apply it to considering former military personnel. Whilst the Military Covenant has brought those from the armed forces onto a supposedly level playing field, in reality, this often means a veteran will be included on a shortlist, but merely as a ‘box-ticking’ exercise to satisfy commitments. It is unfortunately a practice that afflicts almost all attempts of this nature, such as diversity.

As referred to earlier in this report; part of the obstacle is ‘translating’ what a person has done into a language that a) a civilian employer can understand, and b) demonstrates relevant value that person could add. As the recruiter, it is part of our job to first understand that latter point in order to achieve the former.

As advisers to companies on talent, we also have a responsibility to challenge the risk appetite of a client. It has already been seen that hiring from areas away from the traditional ‘hunting grounds’ can be highly beneficial in bringing fresh perspectives and solutions – we should now expand those lateral thoughts to include those from the military. If we can educate ourselves to understand what value veterans can bring, then we could educate our clients.

It should not be misconstrued that this is an argument that veterans should be included on shortlists as a matter of right – our value as headhunters is still, and always will be, the same – to put the best possible candidates forward. But that does not mean we should restrict ourselves to the narrow confines of candidate pools we have in the past. As the recruitment industry moves to becoming more consultative so should its practitioners evolve – that is, if they wish to survive.

Summary of findings

The UK's armed forces are an excellent source of talent and capability, all trained at the tax payers' expense. For many years the personnel's transition into 'civvy street' was largely hit and miss, and there was a great deal of misconception about what the armed forces did and what use veterans could play in the commercial world. This research has highlighted:

- ∞ Many in industry now recognise the range of skills and expertise that service personnel bring although there is general consensus that more can be done;
- ∞ The general public's awareness of the armed forces has increased over the recent years, however, understanding of what the armed forces actually do beyond conflict is felt to be very low;
- ∞ The core aspects of leadership, team-work, communication and self-management are the key tenants of military discipline and these qualities are beginning to be recognised by civilian employers and there are several examples of senior military personnel in successful commercial leadership roles at the highest level of British industry;
- ∞ Resettlement training is effective and especially so at a 'tactical' level (writing CVs, cover letters, etc.) but there is more that can be done to ready candidates for the commercial world, in particular with regards to financial literacy and the psychological impact of the job market;
- ∞ Greater interaction between the military and industry is crucial; there is a mutual gulf in understanding of the two worlds which needs to be bridged and there are encouraging schemes and initiatives underway to address this.

As the market shifts from a 'recruitment and retention' mind set to one of 'talent management' we think less in terms of job titles and more about what value an individual can add. Veterans, employers and headhunters alike have a professional responsibility to adapt to more values-based hiring and policy making.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank all those who gave their valuable time to offer insights and experiences on this subject.

Jon Ager CBE

Marketing Director – Marshall Aerospace & Defence Group
Former Air Commodore, Royal Air Force

Paul Awcock

Head of Talent Management – Lloyds of London

Elaine Billington

Director, HR Operations – United Utilities Plc

Nick Caplin CB

Chief Executive Officer – Blind Veterans UK
Former Major General, British Army

Phil Clarke

Global Head of Resourcing – Serco Group Plc

Peter Fox CBE

Transformation Director – Metropolitan Police
Former Major General, British Army

Andrew Graham CB CBE

Chairman – Waves Training Solutions
Former Lieutenant General, British Army

Clive Higgins

SVP, HR & Organisation – Leonardo SpA

Harry Holt DSO OBE

Group HR Director, Rolls-Royce Holdings Plc
Former Colonel, British Army

Anthony Kirby

Group HR Director – Serco Group Plc

Jamie Lowther-Pinkerton LVO MBE DL

Principal Private Secretary – The Royal Household
Former Major, British Army

Rob Lummis

Head of Employee Experiences – Jaguar Land Rover

David Pitchforth

Managing Director, Defence – Boeing UK

Sir Simon Mayall CB KBE

Senior Advisor – Greenhill & Co
Former Lieutenant General, British Army

Paul McCarter

Managing Director, Defence – Serco Group Plc
Former Captain, British Army

Jo Ridge

Head, Talent and Development – Arqiva Plc

Peter Ruddock CB CBE

Chief Executive Officer – Lockheed Martin UK
Former Air Marshal, Royal Air Force

Sir Trevor Soar KCB OBE DL

Chairman – Chatham Historic Dock Yard
Former Admiral, Royal Navy

Jim Weeden

Engineering & Implementation Director – Arqiva Plc
Former Lieutenant Colonel, British Army

Rear Admiral Simon Williams CB CVO

Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Personnel) & Commander Maritime Reserves – Royal Navy

Colin Wood MBE

Managing Director, Transport – AECOM
Former Wing Commander, Royal Air Force

The Inzito Partnership
35 Grosvenor Street
Mayfair, London
W1K 4QX



www.inzito.com
+44 (0) 203 327 2030