



Part of the family



PROUDLY
SUPPORTING
THOSE WHO
SERVE.



James Shaw
Managing Director
JDS Compressors

For RAF-veteran and Managing Director of JDS Compressors, James Shaw, the transition from military life to a career in the compressed air was an easy one.

Integrity, teamwork - plus an impressive set of mechanical and electrical engineering skills were just a few of the qualities that James could bring to his new role.

Background

James was 20 when he joined the RAF as a Weapons Technician, based out of RAF Odiham in Hampshire. Home to 7, 18 and 27 Squadrons, who together form the UK Chinook Helicopter Force, James worked in the armoury, working on small arms, cobra suppression systems as well as loading Chinooks weapons systems. No stranger to active service, James was deployed to Afghanistan in 2011 before leaving the military in 2012.



James explains how his military experience has proved the perfect training ground for heading up his own compressed air business. Says James:

“Working in compressor sales and service clearly requires specific, hands-on technical skills to ensure that we are both commissioning and maintaining the best solution for our customers.

I gained a level 3 NVQ in aeronautical engineering while I was in the RAF, and the knowledge that has given me has proved invaluable. It gave me belief in myself and has enabled me to build my own business from scratch, starting out on my own, and now, eight years on, employing 11 other team members.

However, the technical training can only get you so far. It's the broader management skills I learnt that really set me on a course to run a successful company and manage the development of my team members.

For example, military life is very structured. You learn quickly that everyone has a part to play, but that comes with self-responsibility. Punctuality, honesty and reliability not only enable you to perform your role correctly - in times of conflict, these skills literally protect the lives of your comrades too.

My role as a weapons technician was high intensity, and you could never predict what might happen next. We were used to reacting quickly and solving problems. I enjoyed that challenge and, in many ways, we face the same challenges in the compressed air industry on a daily basis. Responding quickly to avoid a compressor breakdown, analysing equipment performance and talking with customers to reach the best outcome. It's requires a similar mindset.”

“I’m really proud to be playing my part in the compressed air industry. I feel part of something, part of a bigger family.”