



# From airfield... to air treatment



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THOSE WHO  
SERVE.



**Mark White**  
Senior Product Manager  
Parker Hannifin Manufacturing

**Mark White, Senior Product Manager at Parker Hannifin Manufacturing is celebrating his 35th year in the compressed air industry. But his working life started out very differently, as an Electronics Mechanic based at RAF Henlow. With more than three decades' experience in the field of air treatment, he is passionate about passing on his skills to the next generation and believes the sector offers huge potential to veterans seeking a career outside of the Forces. Here's Mark's story:**

When veterans look to make the switch to a civilian career, they often face a similar problem. Their specialist skills are not recognised by industry. This was certainly the case for Mark, who had to work hard to prove his qualifications to potential employers. Mark explains:

"My time in the RAF equipped me with a wide range of skills - from using the correct tools, to reading drawings down to component level fault finding to name a few. I was a fully trained electronics mechanic, yet when I left the military, the typical career path for many of my peers was to fix photocopiers!

I knew my qualifications were more than suitable for the positions I applied for. However, they didn't carry a recognised certificate, such as a BTEC or diploma, and companies seemed unable to understand how my skills could be applied to the world of engineering.

Thankfully a family friend suggested I try the compressed air industry and the rest, as they say, is history! I joined the domestic hunter, lately Parker Hannifin business in March 1990 as an Applications Engineer and am proud to have worked there ever since."

Mark has held a range of roles in the company, from product management to market development to training and applications, with a speciality in food grade and pharmaceutical compressed air treatment.

Mark continues:

## Background

Mark joined the RAF at 17, working in the Ground Radio Installation Squadron at RAF Henlow. His training included the maintenance and repair of RADAR, air to ground radio, radio direction finders and instrument landing equipment. Working in a 500-strong team with other electronic specialists, the RAF had begun to sub-contract some of the work out and Mark decided to pursue opportunities outside of the military, leaving the Force in December 1989

"A military career can certainly give you an excellent grounding in key engineering fundamentals. It will often be the case that you are operating in a fast-paced environment where speed and accuracy are of the essence. You get used to working under pressure, where those softer skills of teamwork and good communication can really make a difference too.

Compressed air is used throughout industry. It touches almost everything that is made and sold and offers a vast array of career opportunities. So even though those military skills may not come with an industry-recognised label, they are incredibly transferrable."

**"I'd encourage any veteran looking for an interesting and varied engineering role to put the compressed air and vacuum industry at the top of their list!"**

