



Plain sailing transition to a civilian career



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Simon Mackie
Maintenance & Facilities Manager,
Parker Hannifin Manufacturing Ltd

Simon Mackie has 20 years' experience working for Parker Hannifin Manufacturing Ltd (Parker). He shares his story on how the skills he developed from his 23 years in the Royal Navy proved to be in high demand within the compressed air industry.

Background

Simon joined the Royal Navy in 1982, as an Artificer Apprentice. Following completion of the four year apprenticeship he joined the Submarine Service based at Faslane (HM Naval Base, Clyde). Working his way through the ranks, his technical expertise led him to become Chief Petty Officer, responsible for the on-board hydraulics, air and life support systems, a job amusingly titled as the "Wrecker" in submariner speak. He retired from military service at 40 to pursue a new, civilian career.



"I count myself as fortunate that the transition from the Royal Navy to joining Parker was pretty smooth", says Simon.

"The company has a long history of providing specialist air treatment equipment for submarines, so I was already familiar with operating and maintaining the kit on board. At the point I was getting ready to leave the Service, the department manager at Parker, who had close ties to the military, was actively seeking military personnel to join his team."

With his submariner's background and first-hand experience of using the equipment, Simon was able to get to grips with working for a private enterprise quickly. The social side of things took a little longer, however. "I had to relocate my family from Scotland down to the Northeast, so it took a while to adjust", explains Simon. "Having a job that I felt comfortable and secure in certainly helped and, 20 years down the line, it certainly feels like home!"

Simon is now maintenance and facilities manager at the company's Team Valley site in Gateshead, a position he's held for the last 10 years. With 200 staff on site, he also believes his military grounding helps when it comes to supervising teams and working under pressure.

"The compressed air industry has proved to be the perfect fit for my technical skillset, and it can be just the same for other veterans. The work is very relatable and there's nothing difficult to understand if you've worked with technical equipment."

"Helping solve our customers' problems requires reliability, punctuality and commitment. We work until the job is done – just like the military taught us to."