



# newsletter

## *Welcome to the 12th Edition of The White Ensign Association's Newsletter*

As we begin a new year, a new decade, and, according to many of our politicians and media, a new beginning for Britain, there seems to be plenty of change in the air, however the one constant is the demand for conscientious, skilled, adaptable and industrious employees at all levels in the UK work force – traits that the Royal Navy's sailors and marines have in abundance.

The WEA has been championing naval service personnel to employers for over 60 years, highlighting all the advantages that come with having a veteran within the workplace or team. When the Association started this in the late 1950s, it was a relatively easy task, as the vast majority of the country had experience of the military life through either wartime or national service, and had an understanding of the specific and broader life skills that most sailors and marines take for granted. Over the decades this intimate appreciation of what a service life gives an individual has, for understandable reasons, dissipated. Indeed ill-informed and exaggerated misconceptions of potential problems associated with employing someone with a military background have risen noticeably and thus our challenge has become even bigger.

Luckily for us there are a multitude of employers and organisations only too willing to testify to the advantages they have enjoyed by taking on a few, or many, with an armed forces background. Their faith in the skills and experience of men and women transitioning from the Royal Navy and the other



services has inevitably paid dividends allowing them to tap into not only professional skill sets and experience but also the wider “life” skills that become second nature to a sailor or marine – such things as resilience, dependability, teamwork, loyalty and a sense of responsibility.

The WEA is lucky enough to enjoy the support of over 70 industry partners and organisations, across most employment sectors, that encourage, assist and often employ those that have served under the White Ensign. In addition we are blessed with a large network of volunteer advisors who are happy to share their experiences and knowledge of the civilian employment market. This newsletter, as with its predecessors, gives a glimpse across the broad spectrum of employment options facing those leaving the Navy today and provides a few narratives of individual journeys undertaken. The bottom line is that it demonstrates that there is no sector that a sailor or marine cannot thrive in, given the right training and support, and that they would be a welcome addition to any workforce.

John Lavery  
Chief Executive



# Becoming a Humber Pilot

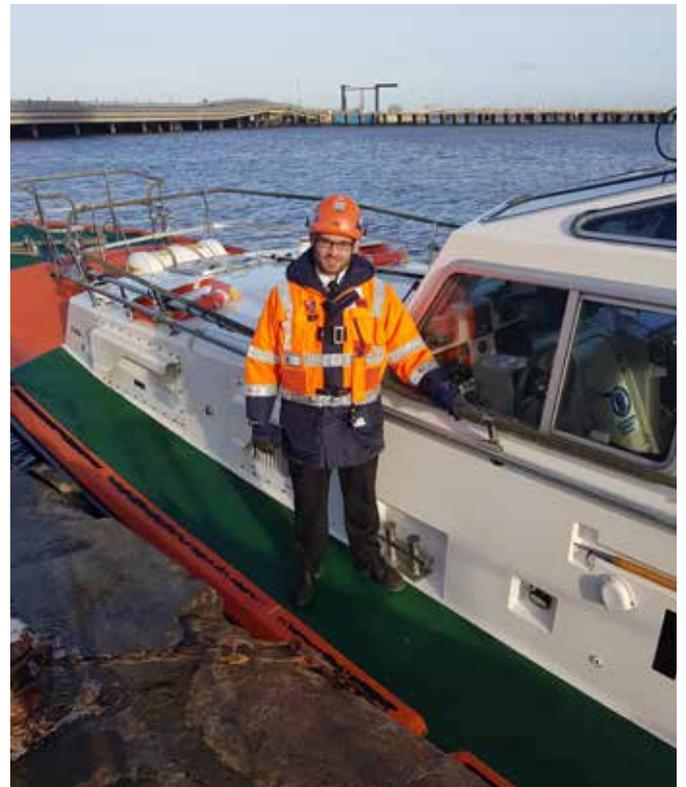
*Associated British Ports newly qualified Humber Pilot, Ben Jeffrey, gives us the inside view on his career move from the Royal Navy last year.*

Ben Jeffrey left the Royal Navy in April 2019. Here we speak to the former Submariner about his move to Associated British Ports, where he has recently qualified as a Class Three Humber Pilot, piloting ships up and down the Humber Estuary.

“In total I enjoyed 12 years in the Royal Navy. In my last position I was responsible for navigating one of the largest nuclear submarines in the UK’s fleet, the Vanguard class submarine - in and out of ports, around inshore waters and out at sea. This was a fulfilling role which I undertook for just over three years. No two days were the same, and the varied and specialised work gave me a great sense of fulfilment. There aren’t many Submariners, and to be able to say I was one of them is something I am very proud of.

Having decided to leave the Royal Navy, my CV was passed to Associated British Port’s (ABP) recruitment team, who sent it to Humber Estuary Services. I was successful in their interview process and began the Humber Pilot Trainee programme that took six months to complete. In a nutshell the training included a great deal of practical experience on the river, along with various assessments.

You essentially start your training on day one which is taken up with a familiarisation day - you meet your manager, the launch crew who drive the boats that link up with the ships, and



you will be issued your personal protective equipment and all the publications, charts and tools you will need to do your job; items such as VHF sets, and a mobile phone.

A Humber Pilot is also assigned to you, who you follow for 10 days. The Pilot will pick jobs for you which they believe are a good cross section of the Humber district; bearing in mind that the Compulsory Pilotage Area starts from the Spurn Light Float out at sea, with the Humber area stretching all the way down from Grimsby, all the way up the Ouse to Goole, and down the Trent to Gunness. There are quite a few ports, piers and docks to see and learn about. Those 10 days give you a broad brush understanding of the Humber, the ships you will be expected to work upon, the conditions you’ll be expected to work in – not the working conditions but the conditions of weather, tide, sea etc. The experience tries to give you an appreciation

and understanding of how the system works, how you get on the ships, how you get off the ships, how passage plans are produced and communicated to the ship's captain and crew. The six months Humber Pilot training is very thorough and well laid out, it has a proven track record – there have been Pilots on the Humber for a very long time now. There is a lot of support from the Pilots and Managers to help you complete the qualification - they are as eager to see you get through as you are, but you do need a certain amount of drive and determination to get on with it, as it is not for the faint of heart. The Humber Estuary is the largest harbour district in the UK, which I think has the largest number of pilots as well, for one good reason, it is very big, it is very dynamic and certainly undergoes a lot of transition when the weather changes, no two days are ever the same.

The Royal Navy is a maritime service, so clearly all the skills you learn as a Naval Officer and the seamanship side of things are directly transferable, such as navigation and the rules of the road. The navigation training courses that I completed in the Royal Navy have certainly benefited me as I worked to qualify as a Humber Pilot. Understanding pivot points, how ships turn and other forces that affect ships is very important. A lot of those fundamentals that you are taught in the Royal Navy, you will find yourself putting into practice on the Humber.

One of the new skills I have been developing is the ability to interface effectively with the bridge team of the ship. For many of the Masters, Captains, Crews and Chiefs that you meet on the Humber, English is not their first language, so the way you communicate and articulate your plan of how you are going to get from A to B is very important. It is vital to fully immerse yourself within the bridge

team, because it is often a small team with a lot of responsibility to get that ship from sea, safely alongside - sometimes in difficult conditions, be it wind, tide or shipping conditions.

For anyone interested in becoming a Pilot, I think the main thing to ask themselves is, will it suit them? Everyone leaves the Royal Navy for different reasons. Some leave for more money, others leave for a better work life balance, so it is important that they identify first and foremost what they are after.

They also need to consider if they want to put themselves in this position of responsibility, because when you are working on the river you are on your own, there is nobody else there, obviously you can phone people and talk to people etc. but ultimately the manoeuvre you make, you are culpable for, it is your decision and the risks firmly rest with you.

I was thrilled to qualify, but it's not fair to say that once you qualify as a Pilot that's it, you know everything; the one thing Humber Pilots will tell you is that you will never know the Humber Estuary well enough to say you are an expert, it always throws surprises at you."

If you are interested in Pilot apprenticeships with ABP, contact recruitment partner Leah Makey by emailing [leah.makey@abports.co.uk](mailto:leah.makey@abports.co.uk).

Website: [abports.co.uk](http://abports.co.uk)

Twitter: [@abphumber](https://twitter.com/abphumber)



# babcock



**Marine | Land | Aviation | Nuclear**

# Considering a new career on leaving the Armed Forces?

## Babcock would like to hear from you.

The skills and experience you have gained during your Service could be the perfect fit to help us support our military customers. We know that Service Leavers have the skills we value.

Babcock, the Aerospace and Defence company, offers many benefits to Service Leavers and Reservists, including:

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- › Training
- › Career opportunities and progression
- › Employee Share Ownership Scheme
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- › Salary Sacrifice benefits eg. childcare vouchers; cycle to work scheme

With a variety of vacancies across the UK, Babcock has challenging and rewarding opportunities waiting for you.

### Our commitment

Our commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant (AFC) has been recognised with a Gold Award from the AFC's Employer Recognition Scheme.



If you are considering a new career then visit our website and register to receive job adverts at <https://jobs.babcockinternational.com/talentcommunity/subscribe/> or email: [armedforcescareers@babcockinternational.com](mailto:armedforcescareers@babcockinternational.com) for more information.

## ***Congratulations to Lewis Wade, another success story from AFH's VCP scheme***



AFH is proud to profile another successful graduate of its Veteran Career Program (VCP), Lewis Wade. Lewis joined AFH in July, after a six-year career with the Royal Navy which was sadly cut short due to a shoulder injury. Lewis was introduced to AFH by the White Ensign Association, a charity that offers personal help and advice for serving and former members of the Royal Navy. The Association spoke highly of AFH's willingness to help veterans develop new careers, and Lewis felt as though he'd found exactly what he was looking for.

During Lewis' naval career as an aircraft engineer, he developed well-honed problem-solving skills and impressive levels of self-discipline. He was also organisationally strong and a capable communicator

– once more, skills he puts down to his time in the Navy. We recognised the value that Lewis could bring to AFH, particularly as someone who is confident when communicating with people from all walks of life, regardless of their culture, personality, or social standing. This is an extremely fortuitous attribute to have when meeting with clients or working alongside colleagues.

Lewis is employed with AFH as a trainee Independent Financial Adviser (IFA) – and he aspires to be a fully qualified, successful, IFA with his own portfolio of clients. His enjoyment of the course is clear, and he has already passed two of the six exams required to become fully qualified, and is working towards his third exam. For Lewis, being an IFA means more than a healthy income, it is also a route to fulfilling work, where he can help clients succeed with their investments. He recommends AFH's VCP programme, but notes that you cannot go in half-hearted.

We're proud to welcome Lewis to the business, and look forward to his eventual graduation. He is one of many military veterans carving out a new life for themselves in the civilian world – and bringing value to both AFH and its clients in the process. Lewis's experience proves once more that AFH's VCP scheme is a clear route to a personally and financially rewarding second career.

If you are a military veteran looking to build a successful life for yourself in the financial world, we invite you to make an enquiry via the details below.

To learn more about AFH's VCP scheme, just visit <https://www.afhwm.co.uk/vcp/> or call 0333 230 9258.





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[www.vsc7.co.uk](http://www.vsc7.co.uk)

## *Employer Recognition Scheme awards*

AW Ship Management were among 34 London-based businesses recognised for their support and commitment to the Armed Forces at a ceremony in the Cavalry and Guards Club, Piccadilly. All 34 received the prestigious silver Employer Recognition Scheme award (ERS) from senior officers from the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force.



The award was received on behalf of the company by Managing Director Paul Trudgeon and Commercial Manager Daniel Taylor. Paul commented: “AW Ship Management have had the opportunity to work closely with serving UK Forces personnel on multiple projects, which has given us a clear understanding of the skills and work ethic present. We are pleased to have been recognised as a company that has committed to support ex-Forces personnel and Reserves and recognise the advantages that their employment brings.”

Brigadier Marc Overton, Chairman of the Reserve Forces’ and Cadets’ Association for Greater London (GL RFCA), who hosted the event, told the audience: “What you have done and continue to do makes a huge difference to the Armed Forces family. Thank you to you and all of your staff for going the extra mile in recognising the important contribution that our serving personnel, veterans and their families make to the nation”.

The ERS recognises organisations that clearly demonstrate support for defence personnel, including giving paid leave for reservists to train in readiness for future military operations, offering work placements or interviews to veterans and actively encouraging staff to join the reserve forces.

Brigadier Andrew Wright, Commodore David Elford and Air Vice Marshal Ranald Munro, representing all three military services, presented the awards.

# *Interconnected services*

## *Marching ahead in line with technological advances*

There are many different avenues and industries open to those who leave the services. Some more obvious than others. The world of technology houses multiple transferable skills and employers on the lookout for highly trained staff. One such company is one of the biggest tech firms you've never heard of...



Equinix is a global data centre and interconnection company, connecting the world's leading businesses to their customers, employees and partners. Operating in over 50 markets across five continents, Equinix has data centres all over the world, enabling almost 10,000 companies to come together to create and integrate their own digital platforms – allowing them to compete in today's digital era.

Equinix has long encouraged ex-services personnel to join the business and achieve their full potential when transitioning back into civilian life. As a company that is defined by its culture, you will recognise its values, which include accountability, positivity, finding a better way, being a team player, and growing professionally. And the skills sought after range across Networking, IT and Facilities teams, and include roles utilising fibre optics, IT Infrastructure management, mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, facilities, telecoms & signalling, BMS/Environmental controls, and power supplies.

Typical posts from the forces recruiting into Equinix include:

- Avionics/Weapons Supervisor
- Engineering Technician
- Marine Engineering Officer
- Engineer
- Maintainer

**As an example, Martin Talbot** a recent starter with Equinix, served in the Royal Navy for 15 years before joining Equinix as a Mechanical and Electrical Engineer in June 2018. We caught up with him to learn more about his transition from military services to cloud services. You can see his interview on YouTube [here](#)



***After 15 years with the Royal Navy, how did you find the transition to Civvy Street?***

I found the transition relatively seamless. The Royal Navy has a lot of processes and programs in place to ensure people who leave can assimilate back into everyday life. As such, I felt well prepared when I left, not least because I was involved in the Career Transition Partnership, as well as being in contact with the White Ensign Association who were incredibly supportive. This ensured that when I did finally decide to move on, I was aware of the opportunities available to me and ready for the next chapter of my working life.

In my naval role as an Electrical Engineer, I honed skills that I still use today, in developing and implementing complex IT systems and class-leading solutions in a wide variety of challenging environments. However, developing transferable skills was not unique to my role – all those involved in military service acquire hugely valuable expertise useful to all types of company.

***What were you looking for when searching for your next career move?***

When I decided to move on from the navy, I wanted to find a similar role using the skills I'd gained from my time in service, but in a new and challenging industry, at the forefront of global digital transformation. That was what was so exciting about Equinix.

***What appealed to you about Equinix and has it lived up to your expectations?***

Equinix is a leading global company within the technology sphere, which has an illustrious history. I knew working within this space would present a myriad of exciting challenges, whilst affording me the opportunity to work with some of the world's biggest companies. To add to this, there was real job security – the global data demand is ever increasing; something that will be exacerbated with the widespread adoption of 5G. As someone who is passionate about problem solving and the evolving technology landscape, the chance to work at Equinix was too good an opportunity to miss.

***How has Equinix helped you during your transition out of the armed forces?***

I have always found Equinix to be very supportive. With a new role, there will always be an expectation to learn new skills and develop existing ones, and I have found Equinix to be a melting pot of ideas, allowing me to discuss progressive and creative solutions to some of the biggest issues facing the data centre industry and wider technology landscape. I enjoy



the culture of inclusivity, and the diverse backgrounds of the people I work with every day. I have also seen that my colleagues are committed to investing in each other's development, and I feel there is a culture of mutual respect and support.

***Are there any similarities between your time in the Royal Navy and Equinix?***

Yes, Equinix has very high standards and values – similar to those held by the Royal Navy! Both roles require you to think independently and be solutions-orientated. As such, no day is ever the same, but this is exactly what makes the role stimulating. On a technical level, I have used similar equipment in both my roles, and the technology I am implementing in data centres is not dissimilar to that which is being deployed by the Royal Navy.

***Would you recommend Equinix and why?***

I would definitely recommend working at Equinix, because there is a sense of camaraderie and the work is truly class-leading. There is opportunity to get involved in shaping the global digital landscape at a pivotal time, as technological advancements force businesses around the world to respond to huge levels of disruption in innovative new ways.

Leaving the armed forces can be quite an intimidating prospect, not least because it's a very organised and regimented way of life. For many people, it is the only career they have known, so taking the leap of faith and joining a new company in a different sector can be daunting. However, at Equinix, I have been encouraged by the interesting work, supportive network of colleagues and opportunities presented to me. I am very much looking forward to seeing how my career progresses here!

To find out more about Equinix's partnership with military veterans and current opportunities please visit our portal at EMEA Military Portal or our careers page <https://www.equinix.com/company/careers/>



# ANTARCTICA

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## *From Armed Forces to Personal Trainer* *by Samantha Thomas*



I joined the Forces in 1997 as a very naïve 16-year-old. I was sent off to the Army School of Catering in Aldershot to start my Chef apprenticeship and, at that time, it was a conceivable possibility that I would have joined for a full 22 years of service plus the time on my apprenticeship nicknamed ‘2 years for the Queen’.

In 1998 I was posted to my first unit, 4th Regiment Royal Artillery in Germany, where I was part of a handful of female ‘attached’ staff. Within a matter of weeks I was out on exercise and within 5 months I was deployed to the Kosovo Border, working with the RAF and international allied forces.

I left the Army in May 2001. I was married at this point with a 9 month old son. My decision to leave was a result of having the choice of a 6-month tour to either Bosnia or Cyprus. That choice was given to me as my son reached 6-weeks. I refused and found a way to be discharged. Now 20 years on from there I am a personal trainer. I’ve been in this industry now for 4 years but I have been self-employed for the majority of the time since I left the Army.

I fell back on my chef qualification for 13 years dipping in and out as I tried to establish my first solo venture in fashion styling and design. This was not easy as single parent but I made my way into a retail role and became an Assistant Manager in a Savile Row suiting company in York which better suited my fashion aims at the time. Whilst doing this I styled a fashion show in Notting Hill and studied for a degree in criminal justice.

This fashion event led to more work a few months later I was project managing a week end long fashion event for the Ideal Home Show in Earl’s Court. The event was successful but for family reasons I needed to move to be closer to family. The move was a disaster for me and didn’t really achieve what wanted for my son and as a result I came apart. This unravelling led me on the route I am on now in which I coach and help people gain lifestyle perspective and health. I am 4 years into the personal training business and I am on course for my next qualification as a strength and conditioning coach.



I had an online business making jewellery and this year I plan to join the two together as my long-term goal is to build them into a sustainable lifestyle brand. The only support I had once I left the Army was from The Royal British Legion. The Army didn't support my leaving in any way. It does take a while to get used to the change in lifestyle but the discipline and resilience one learns in the Army offer skills that will help most people with the lifestyle transition. I would say be prepared for entirely different world perspectives.

I have very much developed to where I am through trial and error and needing to survive. I have worked and volunteered in all sorts of roles to gain different experiences and all these things, which at one point felt very disjointed, have given me a set of skills that are shaping a future I have finally committed to without compromise.

I landed in Salisbury in 2018 and set up the Personal Training business here from scratch. Starting off with classes and teaching nutrition and exercise for the NHS, I have spent 18 months establishing myself here though networking. This year I am looking forward to taking on more clients who wish to look after themselves rather than train hard. I also take on clients who are looking to train for athletic sports goals.

I am not a gym PT and instead have a passion for functional movement patterns and body weight based training. I train people from my house. My back garden is half way through transition to be a gym.

I can be found online at [www.embracelifeuk.com](http://www.embracelifeuk.com)



## ***YOUR WHITE ENSIGN ASSOCIATION***

The White Ensign Association was created almost 60 years ago in a collaboration between senior figures in the City of London and the Board of the Admiralty, and the makeup of its council of trustees today still very much reflects its maritime and financial roots with a mix of influential figures from the City and distinguished retired senior officers. They charge the small staff of the WEA with the performance of four key roles in support of serving and former members of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines, and their families:

- Guidance and advice on the transition from a career and life in the Royal Navy to one out of uniform.
- The provision of unbiased and professional guidance on matters of personal finance including financial awareness training for all newly joined sailors and marines.
- Advice and assistance on all matters of civilian employment including job hunting techniques, CV guidance, mentoring, business start up and self-employment.
- Assistance and support on welfare and personal matters.

### **EMPLOYMENT SERVICES FROM THE WHITE ENSIGN ASSOCIATION**

If you are preparing for employment outside the Service, The White Ensign Association can help you with a number of issues, including:

- CV and Covering Letter Advice
- Interview Skills
- Networking
- Industry and Sector Advice
- Job Hunting and Career Planning
- Introduction to Industry Partners as appropriate
- The Association also has a number of Mentors and Network Advisers that can help you with various specific areas of your employment journey

We provide individual, bespoke and in-depth advice and pride ourselves on the quality of our advice as well as our highly personalised approach to our clients.

### **YOUR WEA TEAM**

Chief Executive and Area Representative  
for the South & South East -

***Captain John Lavery MVO Royal Navy***

Director Finance, Company Secretary & Area  
Representative for Central, North, Scotland & Overseas -

***Lieutenant Commander Mike Howell Royal Navy***

Regional Manager South East -

***Mr David Scholey***

Regional Manager South West -

***Mr Martin Small***

Director Employment Services -

***Mr Dom Hill***

Administrative & Digital Support Manager –

***Miss Marina Maher***

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