

Serving with pride

I was interested to see *TE's* sister title, *Operations Engineer*, profiling the career of Society member and former REME warrant officer Eddie McLellan a couple of months ago (www.is.gd/ilobot). Eddie was responsible for the maintenance of wheeled, tracked and fixed equipment.

The article on Eddie profiled his transition out of the Armed Forces. Eddie wasn't unusual in seeing his professional role change over the course of his career, both military and civilian. As his role changed, he changed sectors from IRTE to IPlantE. What a great example of the breadth and flexibility that the SOE can offer our members.

For many, a military career lasts over a fixed term of 22-25 years. It is inevitable that the vast majority of military personnel need to transition into a civilian role for the latter part of their working life.

I'm struck by the reality that many civilian employers may not always appreciate the level of investment in qualification, skills and experience that the military veteran has had invested in them. The vast majority will have operational experience working in high-pressure situations induced by high threat, extreme weather conditions or austere working environments. With a professional skillset forged in such challenging conditions, ex-military engineers offer a level of capability that often exceeds their industry peers.

Despite this, military personnel - both serving and veterans - can be particularly self-effacing. Military culture is one of Task, Team and Individual; while close in priority, they are nevertheless prioritised. For military veterans, the idea of describing individual success to a potential employer can often be uncomfortable. While the skills and qualifications of ex-military applicants are often greater than others at the same stage and age, this often doesn't translate into job offers.

The UK's consciousness of the benefits and strengths that a military career can bring continues to develop. The SOE remains resolute in supporting our military members' transition to the civilian sector. Given the plethora of transferable skills that our military engineers possess, the engineering sector as a whole can gain much from supporting them.



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