

Does Britain do enough to support returning soldiers to find new employment once they have left the Armed Forces? The jury is still out but for some the transition back to civilian life is a challenge. It can be even more difficult for those who have spent their entire working life in a military environment. However the railway has for many years been making quiet use of returning military personnel. The safety critical nature, hard work and team ethos of the railway finds ready recognition in the eyes of soldiers, sailors and airmen.

Telecommunications specialist Linbrooke, through its training subsidiary Network Training & Resource Solutions Limited (NTRS), has helped the Ministry of Defence (MOD) deliver resettlement programmes, enabling ex-forces personnel find a future in rail telecommunications and engineering.

Around 60 per cent of Linbrooke's field engineering teams have come from the British Armed Forces and therefore have firsthand experience of the sorts of additional challenges these learners face.

NTRS's professional advisors are

all Career Transition Partnership (CTP) and Enhanced Learning Credit Administration System (ELCAS) approved and can offer advice on resettlement packages and help guide candidates through the MOD funding requirements.

#### Centre of excellence

NTRS's National Training Academy is a specialist telecommunications resettlement training centre of excellence, with many years of

experience in the telecoms industry and expert tutors. The academy can deliver City & Guilds, EAL and NQF Level 3 qualifications in telecommunications, signalling and information technology; and in the near future electrification and plant.

Courses are aimed at both service leavers and the general public, and can be run either at the academy's facility in Sheffield or at the convenience of a commercial client.

Linbrooke clients include Network

Rail, Skanska, Thales, Atkins and Siemens. Working with these industry leaders, the academy is able to identify the specific skills required by some of Britain's biggest rail employers and develop training programmes to ensure learners are prepared for a career in the telecommunications industry. This relationship with major industry clients allows NTRS to offer candidates work placements, fixed-term contracts, temporary work or even permanent employment.

The National Training Academy is equipped with a custom-built 36-kilometre fibre optic network that is used by NTRS to reproduce live optical time domain reflectometer (OTDR) testing. The academy has a 240-kilometre dry live sub-sea network that contains three sub-sea repeaters which is also used for testing. There is also an operational GSM telecoms node on site connected to real location cabinets.

NTRS & Linbrooke are able to deliver a menu of Rail Signalling Courses through fully qualified IRSE (Institute of Rail Signalling Engineers) licensed and approved trainers, giving trainees the opportunity to eventually gain an industry recognised Level 3 Certificate as a 'Rail Engineering Functional Tester' working towards gaining a full IRSE licenced qualification.

Winning the peace as well as the war is often a challenge but it is one the railway industry is better placed than most to help with.



## Railway Help for Heroes

