



Tom Vaulters In – Service Surveillance Manager, Anti-Tank Guided Weapons

Tom began the Advanced Engineering Apprenticeship with Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S) at Abbey Wood Bristol in September 2010 at 23 years old after making a career change from Arboriculture (The cultivation and management of trees).

Tom completed his apprenticeship in 2013 and is now employed as the In-Service Surveillance Manager in the Anti-Tank Guided Weapons Section of the International Guns, Missiles and Rockets Project Team. Tom was also awarded UK Ministry of Defence Apprentice of the Year 2013.

Why Tom chose an apprenticeship

After making the decision to change career paths Tom considered a number of options for gaining qualifications and employment in the engineering industry before choosing an apprenticeship. However the deciding factors for him were:

- First hand experience of the engineering sector and project management
- Combining work experience with gaining an internationally recognised qualification and professional engineering status
- Earning while learning - £14k on start up rising to £23k + on completion
- No student loan debt
- Career progression as well as further professional and academic development opportunities on completion

Tom’s experience as an apprentice

I entered the apprenticeship at the age of 20 after deciding that I would like to change my career path completely, from tree surgery to engineering. I really enjoyed my old job but after becoming my own boss I realised that there was no obvious or easy next stage. In reality I found that



I enjoyed looking after chain saws and Land Rovers just as much as the tree work. The apprenticeship allowed me to apply my background knowledge and experience of practical work, as well as develop my theoretical and academic engineering knowledge.

During the apprenticeship I spent time in the Weapons, Air and Amphibious Royal Marine environments. I believe this wide and varied exposure to engineering within defence allowed me to broaden and develop my knowledge from both a personal and professional perspective. I have met some fantastic people and been involved with some exciting activities that would be hard to replicate anywhere else.

I completed in June 2013 and now hold a full time position in one of the teams I spent time with during my apprenticeship.

I am now looking into how I can further myself in both my career and academic qualifications.

Benefits for DE&S

DE&S Has been running the scheme in its current format since 2004 and have a dedicated support team who have successfully trained upwards of 500 apprentices. Ex apprentices are now employed in all areas of our business of equipping the United Kingdom’s armed forces. DE&S recognises the benefit and value apprenticeships bring to the individual and the business and see them as a key component in the strategy to ensure they have the highly skilled people we need to take us forward in the ever changing world of defence.

Want to know more?

Use the following link and download the PDF File.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/defence-equipment-and-support-advanced-apprenticeships