



# From Bulawayo to Bond Street

## A Royal Marine's Story

by

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Like so many of us, I decided to join the Royal Marines at a fairly young age. Impressive 'dits' from a serving Royal on leave in my home town of Bulawayo (Zimbabwe) left me wide eyed and determined to join up straight from school. So, with my mind made up, I completed my schooling, dressed warmly, packed my sense of humour and stepped onto a plane heading north.

Eight years later, having effectively done all my growing up in the Corps, after many a 'nails' exercise, the invasion of Iraq, dodgy food 'behind the wire' and countless 'runs ashore' with good mates, the time came for me to consider the next big step – moving back to civilian life. I'd done what I joined for and now it was time to move on. But how did this transition all work out?

My previous civilian work experience was limited to South African river guiding and bar work, which made my employment knowledge base for future civilian shaky to say the least – or so I thought. I heard many stories of Royal Marines leaving to earn six figures working in various security roles in suspect parts of the world. Although the adventure and financial rewards of this line of work definitely appealed, there was a lot about it that did not.

During my Careers Transition Workshop I gained some very useful insights into writing a CV and all the other issues to be considered if I was to give myself a fair chance to really make the most of my skills and experience. Whatever your rank or rate, the challenge is the same. What was more difficult and frustrating was trying to explain my military career and experience to civilian employment advisors and agencies. I kept hearing that 'as a former Royal Marine, security is probably best': the last thing I wanted to hear! This was not where I was going at all.

I then decided to focus on widening my network and speaking to people who understood where I was coming from and so could offer more appropriate advice. In doing so I sought advice from the Officers' Association and The White Ensign Association. Both organisations were incredibly helpful in advising on civilian careers, networking, and CV writing. During an Officers Association networking event I was approached by Lucy Wood, Managing Director of ForceSelect, about a number of job opportunities. It was not long before I realised recruiting was an interesting world in itself and, spotting an opportunity, here I am!

Although working for any civilian company is a long way from wearing the coveted Green Beret, life in the right company and job, offers boundless opportunities and rewards. That said I actually found the process of matching military skills to civilian career opportunities quite challenging. Likewise, communicating these skills effectively through a CV, over the phone, or in an interview was difficult. However, with the right frame of mind, expert guidance and simply the will and skills to adapt and overcome, I appear to have managed it all.

**ForceSelect are company members of The White Ensign Association and would be pleased to speak to Service leavers about civilian career options (Tel 084579 2914 or [www.forceselect.com](http://www.forceselect.com))**