



## Ashley

### Apprentice Weapons Engineer

Ashley began the Advanced Engineering Apprenticeship with Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S) at Abbey Wood Bristol in September 2013 at 24 years old after changing careers from Sports Conditioning and Nutrition Coaching.

Ashley will complete his apprenticeship in 2016 and is looking to take up a post in the Weapons Operating

Centre. Ashley was part of the winning team in the 2014 Tom Nevard engineering competition to make a radio control paintball tank and came 3rd in the 2014 MOD Cross Country Running Championships.



#### Why Ashley chose an apprenticeship

Ashley chose an apprenticeship as he wanted to change career paths. Engineering appealed to him as he grew up doing a lot of cycling and had always been interested in the technical element. Having decided he wanted to become an engineer he considered all of the options. It quickly became apparent he would have to return to studying to gain the required qualifications, however he had already been to university so he could not get another student loan. This turned his attention to apprenticeships which suited his situation perfectly as he could earn whilst gaining the experience and qualifications needed to become an engineer.

#### Ashley's experience as an apprentice

I entered the apprenticeship at the age of 24 having stumbled into my last career due to my love of sport. After travelling and working as a Surf Coach and Beach Lifeguard after college I went to university to study Sports Science as I enjoyed sport. Whilst studying I set up my own business

helping athletes increase their performance through strength work and nutrition. I enjoyed working for myself and the flexibility it gave me, but I also realised that the progression opportunities were limited and to make the next

step up I would have to do an internship which I could not afford. In addition I did not have time to do sport myself, which was impacting on my performance and making me miserable.

I discovered the apprenticeship through a friend who encouraged me to apply. Applying was one of the best decisions of my life and I have not looked back. At first I was quite concerned about maths, as I scraped a C in my GCSE's which were 8 years earlier! Once at college I found the lecturers and DE&S Apprentice Development Managers to be very supportive. My worries were soon quelled and although I am no master mathematician I achieved a Merit for maths in my HNC, which I would have never imagined before.

Following the year at college I asked for a placement in weapons, as I am very interested in the range of technology used and the broad spectrum of different weapons available. I really enjoyed my first placement in weapons and decided to specialise by joining the Weapons, Ordnance Munitions and Explosives anchor scheme. This scheme allowed me to spend 6 months in Scotland working in a depot building and maintaining a range of weapons from air-ground missiles to torpedoes.



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Living in Scotland was brilliant for developing my personal and professional life, as I made a lot of new friends through work and joining a cycling club. Doing so allowed me to explore a new part of the UK I would not have had the opportunity to in the past. Professionally it helped broaden and develop my engineering skills and knowledge, which I have applied to my work and academic study. I am looking forward to completing the apprenticeship in 2016 and intend to continue studying part time to gain a Master's degree.

### Want to know more?

Use the following link and download the PDF file:

[www.gov.uk/government/collections/des-engineering-management-advanced-apprenticeship-scheme](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/des-engineering-management-advanced-apprenticeship-scheme)

