



LIFE BEYOND THE MILITARY –
OUTDOORS

RXW29

By Anna Baker Cresswell

Our first Rural Week of the autumn programme started on Sunday 8th September – it was a mild week of sunshine and showers and we welcomed 6 HighGrounders from the Army, Royal Navy and Royal Marines who had found their way to HighGround via many and diverse routes; one serving Army Air Corps Aviation Groundcrew Specialist sent us his first e-mail back in 2015..!

In addition to the excellent timetable of presentations and visits which Chris Shepherd had organised, we were delighted to welcome Colonel Simon Chapman RM the new Commandant of the Royal Marines Commando Training Centre at Lympstone to Bicton – a great honour.

Steve Ensell the Education Officer from [BALI](#) also paid his first visit to Bicton this week and gave us a fascinating and very informative presentation about the Landscaping industry and the wide variety of opportunities it affords for those with skills learned in the military.

Big thanks to Jamie Ranson and Dave Archer our evening speakers; Jamie's tree surgery and hedgelaying business in Cornwall [Langore Tree Services](#) is going from strength to strength and we are so grateful to him for coming back to Bicton and sharing his experiences since leaving the Army.

Dave on the other hand, is a new evening speaker from [British Pest Control Association](#) and judging by the response we will be inviting him back..!

Honest, passionate about his industry and full of knowledge and experience which he shared generously, we really enjoyed meeting him!

Huge thanks to all the staff at Bicton who made us so welcome and to all the College presenters and John and Tom from [Clinton Devon Estates](#), Toby from [Forestry England](#), Terry and Paul at [Woodbury Park](#), Nick from [The Outdoors Group](#), Rob at [Devon Riding](#), Debbie and all her friends at [South Yeo Farm West](#), Matt and Kirsty for another great visit to [Hi-Line](#), Ian Bowler for bringing Estate Management to life and helping us to see how it connects the entire land-based sector [Bowler Oakfield](#), and to Phil Sampson [SampsonHall](#) for another inspirational self-employment session to end the week and send our HighGrounders on their way inspired and motivated.

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Last words:

“The most beneficial part of resettlement so far. It gave an insight into so many different sectors of the land-based industry – a brilliant mix of civilian and military backgrounds.

It showed that anything is possible and lack of experience or qualifications in the sector are not a bar, if you are willing to learn.

The networking opportunities and contacts it has provided have been invaluable coming from outside a sector which can look quite closed.”

Royal Navy Warfare Officer.

“I can’t think of anything to improve. The week has surpassed all of my expectations.”

Army Veteran. PWRR.

“I have learned a lot about the varied and diverse employment opportunities available within the land-based sector. The week has given me the inspiration and confidence to pursue a career working outdoors when I leave the Army.”

WO1 Army Air Corps.

For more information about HighGround’s services please contact Anna Baker Cresswell
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