

ED and a Career in the Army

As to my past, in the context of the time, I was born in 1950, my parents never said that there was any problem with my health, I must have been extremely slow and I didn't think about the subject at all, after all I was being fitted with dentures from the age of six. Growing up my generation were bombarded with images of the Army, Navy and Air force and I wanted from an early age to join the Army.

In spite of this father wanted me to serve an apprenticeship and because you did what father said, I became an apprentice engineer, it was OK but I only really enjoyed the fitting shop and I hated the machining, so when the law changed when I was nineteen and I didn't need the approval of a parent I joined the Army.

Signing up originally to serve with the Royal Corps of Transport, (now part of the Logistic Corps), two recruiting sergeants turned up at home to change my mind which they did and I ended up in the Ninth Twelfth Lancers (Tanks to the uninitiated). But I then ended up serving with the Army Air Corps as observer ground handler.

Two very good years with the Air Corps, serving in Northern Island among other places. I transferred into the Royal engineers in 1972, qualified as combat engineer and fitter R.E. Then in 1976, a very hot year, I collapsed on a route march, and after investigation and visiting hospitals, it was the army dentist that identified my problem.

So plans all changed now and I had a medical discharge in 1977, and now I knew what the problem was.

I tried for every job in the paper, that was where you looked for jobs then, no internet, only fishing nets, and I was taken on by the Leicestershire Ambulance Services.

A great job, 40 years I did, and progressed to paramedic, I did get warm on occasion in the early days, but back then before health and safety, we drove around with the sliding doors of the cab open on hot days. Now of course every car and ambulance has air conditioning, though you do find staff unwilling to use it. But after being told that the temperature is a problem for me they used it.

Now of course the Ambulance Service is a much more complicated job, and you can go to university and train there for two years, or join through the Ambulance Services direct as a emergency care assistant, you then can progress to paramedic from that role.

It was a great job and I only wish I had done it straight from school, and anyone who wants to join an Ambulance Service now, well good luck to you, the world is your oyster now for a paramedic, I have friends who have become doctors, university lecturers, working on cruise ships and oil drilling rigs and there are so many more roles you can do.

So good luck to you all.

John Norfolk

Supporting a normal lifestyle

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