# Paul – Interview 1 2016

(officer, 39 years, widowed/married, yes, -1)

## C

I know it is a long time ago but if you can take your mind back, why did you join the RAF?

## Paul

I think it was probably what I was always going to do, my dad was in the Air Force he was in 12 years. I was in the Air cadets which he ran, part of, I don’t really remember a time when I wasn’t going to do it. I am real ….. (Unintelligible) At my school they tried to dissuade me from joining the Air Force, I didn’t do very well at school for various reasons and I think they saw me doing something else sort of thing. I think it was just something, I don’t remember a time when it wasn’t what I was going to do.

## C

Now I know you left on retirement but did you extend?

## Paul

No, I was offered signing on til age 60 and that came through as part of this NEM which they are bringing in at the moment and funnily enough I was phoned up when I was on the transition workshop to say we have a letter here offering you to stay in and I said I would think about it over the weekend but my initial reaction is no because I was that far down the route at that stage anyway I sort of went through a bit of a moment probably about 2005 when I was on the school, which I loved, cause I was doing training and leadership management and I thought if I’m going to go now is the time to go and that is the time I did my commission as well so I was in a 3 way thing, do I stay in the Air Force as a WO, do I take the commission or do I leave. I had to think about that quite carefully but apart from that my principle has always been if the Air Force offers you something to sign on you can always come back and look at it again later but this was the only occasion where I turned round and said no. I am leaving now, and as you know family circumstances had changed and the Air Force was no longer conducive to my lifestyle, and I accepted that you know being a single parent, the operational bit, like Steve is doing, even with my daughter being 23 that becomes hard. So it wasn’t too difficult to make a decision really (unintelligible)

## C

So it was more to do with family circumstance to leave in the end?

## Paul

Yeh, I mean there was always that date in the diary that was always coming up in the future anyway, that was always there. Cause I am old, I had five years transition. So I have actually been transitioning to a lesser or greater degree for the previous 5 years. So to turn round in July/Aug last year to say do you want to stay in? I was too far down that road, I did extend on the tour, due to family circumstances, that was purely the Air Force, I said I need a bit of stability and they agreed. But I was told I would be going away when that period had finished.

## C

So when you made that decision not to accept that extension, how did you feel?

## Paul

To be honest it made life easier because it wasn’t the Air Force saying to me your time is up off you go, it became my choice then. So actually that as far as getting my head round leaving that actually helped me because the Air Force wasn’t kicking me out because I was too old the AIR FORCE had given me a chance to stay in. And I also came to various views about the AIR FORCE that I didn’t think the way it operated was going to change dramatically, funnily enough through contractualisation, the infra was falling apart. I saw a huge change coming up and I have always been able to deal with the change but I thought I was going to end up becoming more deployable rather than less deployable an for me I had kissed all that stuff off years ago and now being on my own now and wanting to rebuild my own personal life …it was quite an easy decision to say no, I’ve done my time that is enough. And also I had taken myself out of the promotion running, when it came to the 5 yr point. I had 2 years the other side to be Wing Commander and I looked at Wing Commanders around and I thought I don’t’ want to do what they do, the pay was good but apart from that I didn’t see any attraction so I was quite happy, my head had got round to the stage you have done your bit, you have got to a certain level more then I never thought I’d get and I defined success as that, that is good. I was happy

## C

So when it actually came to leaving how did you feel about that, those last few days in uniform?

## Paul

Crickey, em I was concerned, the immediate thing was how would I deal with it emotionally. I knew that the Wing was going to lay something on and I had a rough idea the sort of stuff they were going to do. So I sort of psyched myself up for that really. It was to be honest it was a bit like leaving any other job I’ve left before. I was concerned about what I was going to do afterwards, nothing was coming up. A few people I had talked to and job applications I had put in for which I thought I would be pretty well suited for nothing came of it whatsoever so I was a bit nervous about that, but it wasn’t nearly as much of a shock as I thought it would be. Because I had psyched myself up, I knew it was coming so I enjoyed it. Actually I really enjoyed my last day at work, I really enjoyed. And I was going on a course up at Manchester Uni, which I was really looking forward to, straight away afterwards so I didn’t yeh I was a bit sort of on auto pilot, it hasn’t sunk in yet properly really.

## C

How do you feel now that it is gone?

## Paul

At the moment I am still in that period of transition and I suspect that sometime in the future I am going to wake up and I think God I really miss all that. But I don’t at the moment. The job I am doing is ideal for me to transition into Civvy Street because I am working with what I know from the military but in a commercial environment sort of thing. So that is a really good steady building block to doing that sort of stuff. I mean my focus was more about the domestics, after my wife died I was having to think about getting the house it dragged on longer than I thought and moving out of quarters and all that sort of stuff. So I suppose because of my own particular circumstances I was in that position of wanting to get to the other end of this really transition where I am getting used to not having a wife any more, got to get used to not being in my job anymore and all that sort of stuff and that had been going on a while really. So, in a way I was just craving the stability, that would come with, once I got a job and that is what I am enjoying at the moment just having a job. I haven’t got any massive decisions to think about. I’ve got somewhere to live, all the things I’m bothered about I’ve got. I’ve got a job, I’ve got some where to live and I have got a personal life. So in my particular case, this is a little bit of closure.

## C

So thinking back to when you were in the AIR FORCE how would you describe your job?

## Paul

I saw myself as a leader and a manager, certainly in my last appointment if that is what you mean. So it was basically running the Wing on a day to day basis really which I loved. In fact going back to your earlier point I couldn’t see another job which I was going to enjoy as much as that.

## C

What was it that made you love it so much?

## Paul

It was the people that was predominantly the thing. It was because of my particular circumstances I had quite a bit of influence over how things were run or not run. I had been through, been through that is one way to say it, I was on my fourth boss on the Wing, who was great as it happened. But I was pretty tired, I felt physically tired actually. So my job was to sort of, do the co-ordination across the organisation, do the governance and make sure everything ran smoothly and after 4 years as would anyone I got to be quite good at it really.

## C

How did the job make you feel?

## Paul

I was probably on auto pilot at the end of it, I was a bit sort of frustrated with it. Only because there comes a time when you are at a certain age, there comes a time when, where and I have always been really mindful of this, of always being someone who wants to keep things changing to keep it fresh I don’t want to go back to how it used to be and I sort of found myself thinking “you know there is a reason we do things like this” and I thought I am not really helping the organisation that much.

## C

Can you give me an example?

## Paul

No you just get officers coming in and I got on very well with Dick, and I thought he was a breath of fresh air. But clearly I had spent a lot of time working to get structures in place, we had done a complete overhaul of the Wing and I was probably very protective of that and he was saying well why do we do it like that? And I didn’t ever say no or anything like that but I just thought this is going to become, I was getting a bit protective about it sort of thing and it was time to move on. I had been on the Wing, as an Officer on the Wing I had been there a long time, longer than I had been in any other job ever. So again that added more reason as to why I needed to move onto something completely fresh really because I needed it.

## C

So when you were on the Wing, and I appreciate the situation you were in with your wife, but from a professional point of view what were the things kept you awake at night?

## Paul

I went through a difficult spell when John was there cause he was very driven and I found myself increasingly having to manage John’s energy. I agreed with just about everything John wanted to do with the WING, the Wing was in a bad place. It was almost like a swan, it looked very graceful on the surface but underneath it was paddling like hell. And John had all the right ideas and we were of one mindset we both wanted to do the same thing and had the same ideas and a lot of the changes that came to the Wing I brought in, they were my ideas. Phil when he was there he was another one, he wanted to take things back, he was a bit of a … I found myself doing his job a lot because of the nature of the person sort of thing. So I went through a bad period when John was in charge because the pressure was just …

## C

Because he is John

## Paul

Because he is John and I found the pressure intense I actually had to take time off sick because he just was completely ragging me to be honest …

## C

And yet you are smiling … (laughter)

## Paul

Everything he wanted to do was good and me and John have a lot of respect for each other. And John didn’t realise, he is so task focused and I am more of a people focus person. Phil I get on with again really well and I enjoyed my time with Dick the brief time I had so that was really nice at the end. So that is what used to keep me awake just certainly when we doing the change bit, making sure the Wing didn’t break. And I thought John was going to break it a couple of times, just trying to do the right thing but trying to do the right thing but trying to do it so quickly that people couldn’t keep up with him. So that was what, but that was my job. Part of my job was to manage the boss. Act as his conscience and be the person that tells him stuff or her they didn’t want to know. Which I had no problem doing what so ever cause I can do, because I believe I can do that in the right way.

## C

Have you got an example of that you can share?

## Paul

Well it’s a good or a bad example. Let’s have a think. We had one particular meeting when John was there, where he was just completely in the zone, and why are things happening and I went back in there and just said, you are going to break people and all this sort of stuff, you have to slow down and he didn’t take it very well at all. That’s the bit when I had to go the medical centre and say look I am a bit at the end of my tether sort of thing in fairness I went back to him and said look I’ve been signed off sick I just to … and he was really apologetic and you know John, he was very in the zone sort of thing. With Phil he was he was always talking about the old days and I thought we were in a different organisation than the Wing that he used to run and he kept talking about the old days and I said “people on this Wing don’t understand they can’t identify with that organisation” and all this sort of stuff he was very focused on that such that the relationships he built back then like with Charles Cross. One of the first things Phil did was he wanted me to get the guys to fill in a survey to say how good they were so that they could use it as a marketing thing. And I had to say that is really inappropriate you can not do that he went into this thing about Charles’s done wonders and all of this sort of stuff. And I was just like, well he may of but you can’t do this, this sort of thing. So I had to in that way I was probably ideal as 2ic because, I had taken my hat out of the ring for promotion. I wouldn’t say I was militant because I don’t think I was but I did what I could to basically trying to protect them and the guys from what I considered to be bad decision making, clearly that was my view, but it was bad decision making.

## C

So there was a balance being struck

## Paul

Yeh, so I have to add I got on well with them both really well but my job was to keep the Wing moving and part of that is managing your boss, that’s what the deputy is supposed to do. Tom Watson and Jeremy Corbyn.

## C

So on reflection, looking back over that period, 4 different bosses is quite unusual anyway. How did it make you feel, your job was fairly consistent and stable.

## Paul

Yeh, I mean it was part of what I did as a WO really. I always moved away from being a WO but I am a big believer in that anyway, you need someone, if you are going to a be a leader you need someone who every now and again, you need someone to bounce ideas off. With John I thought his ideas, we were on the same mindset all the way through, and John in fairness to him has always sort of come back to me and appreciated that I provided the cheques and balances so.

## C

What keeps you awake now? If anything.

## Paul

Not a lot keeps me awake now actually. I am very into my current job, not as much keeps me awake now certainly that I have got the house sorted and I’ve got a personal life. I am enjoying being further down the food chain. And I am enjoying just working for my technical skills as to what happens in the AIR FORCE cause that is really what I am employed to do at the moment. I am finding the work interesting and the people I am working with interesting I am getting a lot out of it so actually not a lot keeps me awake at the moment. I haven’t started thinking about what the job after this is because I am on a short term contract. But I rather hope it will carry on.

## C

So what do you think you are getting out of this job?

## Paul

In a way on the surface what I am doing is getting an understanding of a commercial organisation, how defence contractors work. How they put bids in to take on that is the tangible headline stuff, I suppose the benefit I am personnally getting out of it is I am continuing what I did before, continuing my technical knowledge, using my technical expertise with a couple of people who were in the AIR FORCE before. As well as people who haven’t been in the AIR FORCE. And I am probably just carrying on to a certain extent what I did in the AIR FORCE so I almost think of it in a way like another posting because I am still doing defence stuff, I am still doing RAF stuff I am still doing specialist stuff, still doing specialist stuff. In the future I hope I will see this as a really good transition job but I am still in transition and I think in a way, in my head, I am still seeing this as another posting.

## C

So what would you say, you got all the way to WO which you did fairly quickly..

## Paul

38 yeh, but I started early.

## C

How old were you when you joined?

## Paul

16

## C

Crazy, crazy. So what was it that made you think that stopped you from going further from getting that Wing Commander or higher?

## Paul

Well it was my own choice really. I did ICSC but I was ill during the course part of that was stress related so I was taken off the course because I was ill and I couldn’t re-join the course which was fair enough. I had 2 years at the other end of my career anyway sort of thing and obviously it was always going to be a push to get that done and I was on good reports they were absolutely fine. I probably didn’t want it really. I probably didn’t want the Wing Commander bit really. And I think it is depends how you define success and I had got to the stage that, you know, for me success wasn’t necessarily getting to Wing Commander. Success was something a bit more ethereal than that a bit more are you enjoying yourself. As you said I got to Warrant Officer I got to Squadron Leader I’ve done alright. So I was doing my masters as well which added to the stress situation as well. And that was a success. And I was enjoying that and I thought I’d rather do my masters then go back onto ICSC and go on to my Wing Commander. For me the Masters was far more important, cause that bear in mind I had limited educational background before, that was more of a success than anything so in a rambling sort of way I thought I felt I was still a bit of the gravy train still if I went for the next rank. I wasn’t going to be a Group Captain clearly, if I got Wing Commander I would be doing a staff job somewhere which I probably wouldn’t enjoy nearly as much as what I was doing at the moment. So it just came to that sort of thing which I’d always said if you don’t think you are going to enjoy it in the future also I got fed up with the going away stuff and doing the operational sort of stuff, I thought, I really don’t want to do that. Even before my wife died. So ..

## C

So what was it about the operational side that ..

## Paul

Leaving your family, leaving your family and also at the same time having a posting on you while you were away and having to sort a move out while you were still away and that just didn’t appeal to me in the slightest. And I had started to question is the AIR FORCE actually for me anymore.

## C

What about the staff job, what didn’t appeal?

## Paul

Well it would depend what the job was really. But If I wasn’t, Wing Commander would have been great if I had got the right staff job. I didn’t really see what that staff job was. PJHQ, Air Cmd stuff I couldn’t see a job that I thought I really want that job. All throughout my career I always knew which job I wanted next, so when I was with your husband, I really wanted to be in that particular job and got it. I couldn’t see what that job was as a Wing Commander, I loved being acting Officer Commanding for 6 months, I thought that was great. I didn’t see I was ever going to get something as good as that ever again. ….At the time there was no extension, I was going to get a staff job there was no chance of a command job again. For me it has always been about leading and managing people, that is what really I get a buzz about. So I didn’t see that coming so it was the right time to go really.

## C

If you had a magic wand what would you change if you could change anything?

## Paul

I don’t know if I would change anything, I don’t look back on any of my career with any sort of thinking ... I probably got a bit too intense about my work at one stage and over stretched myself, as I have described. But could I have taken my commission earlier? Probably but I am quite proud of the fact that I did the Warrant Officer bit and then moved on I think it gave me, my time as a commissioned officer was much more enjoyable having been a Warrant Officer before. Cause it gave me a certain amount of latitude that other commissioned officers didn’t have, that is the way I interpretated it. So in short I don’t think I would change anything, I don’t know. Stop grinning at me, Caroline.

## C

Sorry it’s just that to have served so long and not want to change anything is really nice.

## Paul

38 years flew by, I was enjoying it, I did some brilliant jobs no I wouldn’t change anything at all. (unintelligible) I think that how the AIR FORCE is going to shape out in the future I am not sure it is something that I would enjoy. Cause I think it is difficult to sustain it at the moment I think that the infra is crumbeling and I don’t see a solution unless some Government comes along and massively invests in defence, which needs a conflict to do that really, I don’t as with all public services I think it is struggling and I think for my old trade and the specialisation and I think it is going through a difficult period. The size of the AIR FORCE is downwards it’s not ever going to go upwards. So really I am getting out at the stage that I have enjoyed it I don’t think I would enjoy it if I carried on much longer to be honest.

## C

What would you say is your best memory of your career?

## Paul

Getting the Masters at University, the best day ever. Being there in uniform with the gown on because I never thought, I left school with 2 O’Levels.

## C

What did the Masters represent?

## Paul

It gave me credibility.

## C

You think you were lacking that?

## Paul

Yes, I think in my head I was. In my head I was lacking credibility, yes definitely and to do that as a Squadron Leader having being promoted, If I hadn’t been promoted to a Squadron Leader I would have been a Warrant Officer in Officer clothes so getting the Masters meant yeh, I have succeeded. I am trying to think what the other one was now.

And I think I was deeply proud in the end of what we did on the Wing, I think we changed the organisation. This is me and John largely. From a pretty from something that wasn’t enjoyable to work on and I think we did the change incredibly well and I think we brought the people along with us part of that, and I think it is a really good organisation now a success and everyone on the Wing I have spoken to, careful, of the monkey tree syndrome, but all the seniors and the buzz on the Wing was great.

## C

And can you give me an example of the kind of success you are talking about?

## Paul

When I arrived on the Wing we we had to deploy 10 people out to Sierra Leone, this was in Wiltshire days. We couldn’t muster up 10 without taking them off the Flight that had just come back from Afghanistan because no one had the preparedness in place. Within, when was the Mali thing, 2014? We rustled up 60 people in no time because we were all prepared because we had the mechanisms in place to make sure people were prepared and made sure people were accountable, you know. And from that we did that all the time, we never had a problem. We saw our future as contingency operations whereas quite understandable the mindset before was about doing Afghanistan coming back having a rest and then going back round again and that attitude changed.

Going back to enjoyable moments, when I left and I loved the Top Table and all the stuff on Facebook about me I was utterly bowled over by. That will stick with me for ever.

## C

I am going to get all tearful.

## Paul

Me too sitting here.

## C

That bowled you over...

## Paul

People were very generous and there are a lot of nice people out there and that made me feel very good, yes.

## C

For the benefit of the transcript but just to explain that for the transcript...

## Paul

In order to go on operations anywhere around the world people have to have certain stuff in place. To ensure they were able to move quickly so we had to move people officially within 5 days and sometimes within a matter of 2hrs. But so they had to have things like medical docs, passport in place, they have had to have done weapons handling and equipment in place so that they were ready to move. And if we didn’t have that so people could pick up and go so we had to have systems in place so we knew all the time what qualifications, were they medically fit, were they dentally fit, were their passports in date. What courses did they need to do, qualifications did they need to have and we had to have systems in place so that their Flight Commanders that became their main job not flying all around the world doing exciting jobs but it became making sure you Flight was ready to move.

## C

What if anything do you miss so far?

## Paul

I miss the people I work with, well some of the people I worked with, well many of the people I worked with. That is it, I went to a dining in night on Friday. The advantage is I still go to many of these things although I am wearing a different uniform I am still part of the social club and I don’t ever want to cut that off because that is my link with the people I have grown up with, those that are left, for 38 and a half years. So definitely that I don’t miss the bureaucracy in the slightest but I miss that.

## C

That is all my questions

## Paul

No

C

I always say that if I think of anything else...

## Paul

The things I don’t miss is the bureaucracy, it became very difficult to do simple stuff. And it frustrated me, it frustrates your other half as well I know. I never really enjoyed being part of a bureaucracy or a hierarchy. I love doing what I am doing now working in a flat hierarchy where you can turn around to you big manager, you may want to think about that. It’s largely a flat hierarchy.

## C

It’s interesting that you say you don’t like the bureaucracy cause the mil is very bureaucratic and you don’t get much hierarchical than the military

## Paul

Yeh, I always felt that I was out of place, I always felt out of place in all of that really. Where you define success as your ability to move up the hierarchy I was never your standard RAF person in that respect really. One of the advantages of being a Flight Lt or a Squadron Leader going upwards and outwards I never felt really held back by as long as I did it the right way giving my opinion, I was never, the danger is with the hierarchy is you end up saying yes to something and not really having a debate about something before you come to that decision and going along with that decision I felt too many people were afraid to have that discussion beforehand. Because the hierarchy just stop people from using their brains too much, really.

## C

Constricted.

## Paul

Yes. And I think if you want to be successful then people say things that people higher up the hierarchy want to hear rather than what they should hear. It makes me out to seem a bit of a militant but I have always tried to play that quite lightly I always found it quite constraining really.

## C

But it wasn’t something that made you think you wanted to get out?

## Paul

No, no it was to be honest because I joined with that I didn’t know a lot different. I think doing the education bit the Masters and stuff like that and when I was over at the school, it was an eye opener to me. Cause I saw that leadership was multi-faceted and difficult to define and I felt that when I got back into other jobs there were too many leaders who didn’t see it as multi-faceted and complex they saw it as a simple thing where you just sort of … I don’t think in a hierarchy people understand the complexities of being a leader so much. Does that make sense?

C

I think so. I think what I am hearing is it is almost leadership by numbers instead of doing leadership...

## Paul

yeh, I think people have got the estimate process they have this process, people talk about mission command it’s like leadership from a manual and I think it is far more complex than that and I think... I am fascinated by the whole leadership thing and when I was at the school I opened my eyes to leadership to something being very complex and not something you could just role a template out and say ‘do it’. Staff College I never had an ambition to go to Staff College, everything I saw about Staff College just made me think that it wasn’t training people to think as much. Just the estimate and things like that and I saw people massively indoctrinated and actually I think we want free thinkers.

## C

Do you think the military is conducive to that as an organisation?

## Paul

No I think it has become less conducive to it. That was one of the frustrations I had really. And I think doing the masters, my experience on airman command, I’ve done loads of leadership courses it is a brilliant I have access to some brilliant people who have a different way of thinking about leadership. I think that military leadership is but its contextual leadership and I saw too many people going from operations and trying to apply that to in a more passive organisation where it doesn’t translate over you have to change your leadership style. So I think it is almost like the more I knew about leadership the more I learnt about leadership the less I understood about it but the more I recognised that not understanding it was a good thing. Does that make sense …?

## C

It is interesting.

## Paul

There are a couple of books out there and he wrote about military experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan and he wrote about the challenging the military about having freer thinkers. Loosing Small Wars it is called. And it talks about the failures in Afghanistan and Iraq and how they came about and it was his view that is wasn’t just about bad equipment, and bad politics it was also about military leadership and it should be under the micro-scope cause it sort of the focus was on Govt failings and actually there were military failings and it talks about staff college and closed minds, not everyone has closed minds there are some massively clever people out there. But there are also just people who say yeh there is the estimate process.

## C

That is the answer, that is the question

## Paul

you will get that it any walk of life I am sure but I think it manifests itself more in

## C

Where did you see, what is it about where the military is going that you find so frustrating?

## Paul

Em think being where I am working now, we are putting together a bid and we are coming up with some really, innovative stuff. Most of those innovations have been thought of before but people have not been able to get them through in the military, the innovations. They have never been able to get them through and you know you’re posting cycle every 2 years means that you manage stuff for 2 years you never really manage to have that revolutionary moment and this is what John did really well. He nearly broke me doing it but he was dead right something big had to change. And in fairness he felt constrained because he had 2 years to do it. He wanted to do it in 6 months but I think that makes it difficult and it is a big bureaucracy and cutting through that to deliver change is the military is getting a bit left behind you knowing a way I am still fighting the same discussions in my current job that I was when I was in the military. Sort of coming round to the view that they will be able to deliver it where the military can’t.

## C

And why do you think that it?

## Paul

They get more time to do it, if you r leaders change every 2-3 years or something like that. You don’t get a clear agenda, a Chief of the Air Staff or a Air Officer Commanding 2 Group will be in for 2 years they are looking at the next job for a good chunk of that job so therefore what you’re not doing is getting into the detail and proper analysis of what is needed and provide that t revolutionary right I have done my research and I think this is where we need to go in the future and oh by the way it will take the best part of 10 years. to do it but that is the vision. So where is the vision thing, it is very difficult to have a vision when you are only going to be in the job for two years. Whether you are Chief of the Air Staff or a Flight Lieutenant yeh.

## C

You are only the third person I have interviewed so far and there are definite patterns of views from people, is the lack of vision the feeling that the RAF is on a treadmill just going round and round.

## Paul

I think the military as a whole is.

## C

There is no room for anything else, partly because they are too frightened.

## Paul

We are coming up with a model for the next 25 years commercial lead at Air Command they want a 5 year plan. We can’t deliver what we want to deliver in 5 years, bring in a new infra it needs that strategic thinking and the military as a whole, but we can’t do strategy because we put all the constraints into

## C

I am getting flash backs …like trying to look 20 years ahead and there is just a black hole to fill

## Paul

One of the things I am quite proud of is the whole training bit. It changed to a single trade and whether people think it was the right thing or the wrong thing we probably had discussions but I was on that for 4 years and I didn’t finish it and if I had it wouldn’t have just been me but the team would have been together for to deliver that. Or a 6year project. Or when I left things hadn’t changed some things went backwards

## C

It’s the 2 yr career cycle and needing to do 3 tours to get promoted. And no one wants to hang around

## Paul

it’s interesting because under this NEM it’s going to be slower but your hive minds your brains are going to move every 18 months.

## C

It doesn’t work. I think I would find it too frustrating

## Paul

I did it But I really wanted the training to change the course still churns out the same old rubbish and that is one of the things I really wanted to change the reduce the size of the training rather than loosing people for months on end to training why not do it differently. So I was proud of what I did there I didn’t finish the job.

## Paul

That I think is part of the problem, yeh, yeh. It was a good life

C

You are getting to use that knowledge.

## Paul

Yeh, getting my masters was just brilliant the officers coming in now are very clever switched on guys and we just need to make sure they

## C

I always think I had more freedom as a Junior Flight Lieutenant then I ever did the rest of my career, whether that was because the AIR FORCE was different 50+ thousand instead of

## Paul

Yeh well Squadron Leader has gone down in status it’s sort of gone down, a Squadron Leader used to be God. But it’s not depressing. It’s still the people you meet good people.