# Alex Interview 2 - 18 June 2018

## C

It’s been an entire month and a bit since you actually left hasn't it.

## Alex

Yeh definitely, it just peters out as you probably know cause you do all the resettlement stuff and you are not at work or you are at work less and less it sort of like it is a really good way to transition definitely cause you just sort of break off bit by bit from them, bit by bit …. (talks to husband) so yes you just break away gently rather than going in one day and then not the next so by the time it came to my last day I couldn't wait to get out and people were going 'oh do you want to stay for a coffee' and I was like 'not really' you just want to go home now.

## C

So, on reflection how do you feel about leaving?

## Alex

yeh I am fine, absolutely fine I said I wasn't going to start looking for jobs until July so I had always planned to have this summer off until September time so not look for any jobs but I have accidently applied for one so ..

## C

What area are you looking at?

## Alex

It’s just ridiculous I was on the train on the way back from a friend of mine and we had been talking about Reserves jobs so I have applied for a reserve post at Abbey Wood I don't know if I will get it because it is a Wing Commanders job and just have this suspicion, it’s a part time one as well which would be ideal because I could do a couple of days there and a couple of days with my dog grooming salon which I am setting up as well.  It would be great but I get the feeling they always make these jobs for someone, you know with somebody in mind so that is what I think about it.

## C

Quite often they do but that means then you are on their radar if you apply for it they will have your name and if anything else comes up...

## Alex

yeh I guess so it’s not really what I wanted to do but it seems easy it’s a policy job so for a couple of days a week and because it is only part time I don't lose my pension, I haven't checked all the terms and conditions but yeh so it seemed crazy not to and the closing date was Friday so I had to DE civilianise my CV which was ridiculous cause I had spent ages trying to make it civilianised and they wanted a CV so I thought shit I am going to have to make it back into a military one, which is what I have done so I sent all of that in on Friday so we will see how that goes I guess.

## C

That appeals just because of the ease and practicalities of it?

Alex

yeh I think so, I don't think it will be that difficult I am kind of like yeh I could do policy stuff that doesn't me at all I quite like staff work so you get somebody to line manage some poor SO2 get a reservist boss who they will get threaders with but I thought that would be an ok starter for 10 and then I have got some stuff to do some like consultancy workshop down in Bristol I will go that in July because I think consultancy is where I want to go really.05:24 But I will just see what comes up.  Stuff comes up on Linked In all the time like jobs I would be interested in but I kind of said to myself I just need to keep my powder dry and not rush in and wait to find the right job, I'm not going to do the house and my husband and stuff by getting stuck into interviews and CVs and all that kind of stuff, yeh I've got a few weeks to get my head round that so yeh.

## C

And dog grooming as well is that something you have set up already?

## Alex

No, not quite so I have got two days left of my training to do because the lady who runs the training centre I go to her mum is terminally ill so I kind of said I will do my last 2 days when you know that stuff is out of the way. I have passed all my exams, got distinctions in those and they were like 'oh that is amazing, a distinction' but it is like a GCSE level qualification so I would have been gutted if I didn't learn enough to pass that.  The problem is with the house is I should really be spending time making my house more liveable but I also want an area to do dog grooming in  so we have kind of cleared out an out building which hasn't got  a front to it but it is under cover and sheltered I am just trawling around auction sites and selling sites trying to buy some equipment cheaply rather than spending thousands and thousands of pounds on it so I have given myself a budget of a £1000 to spend to buy everything I need a ?@?@/ table and I think I have found one of those down in Cornwall and then just start from there may be doing a couple of dogs maybe one or two a week for people I know to build up my confidence with it which is really bizarre because you would think  could just throw myself into it but I just don't feel hugely confident to take on any dog of any variety with no other help or anything like that so I am just going to take it easy and build up a business that way.

## C

Soon reflection you are quite content quite happy things are progressing as you'd hoped.

## Alex

yeh, yeh definitely.  It took bloody ages to get my gratuity though that was stressful it was like 3 weeks, its 7-14 days most people get theirs in and I was like, maybe I am not entitled to anything!

## C

that panic

## Alex

yeh, maybe the pensions calculator was wrong.  This is going to be a very expensive summer if I don't get that.  But that came through in the end so that was fine.

## C

So, is there anything you would change about your leaving experience?

## Alex

I don't really think so no.  No, I really can't think of anything.  I think my dog grooming was like 5 days a week for quite a few weeks then a couple of days here and there and it was down at Shepton Mallet which was kind of, God only about 40 miles but it would take about an hour and a half to drive maybe an hour and 40 minutes and I was staying with a friend one or two of the dates and driving there and back and 5 days a week it was just getting a bit tiring really that big long drive or staying over somewhere so I would probably have spread that out a bit more maybe I think if I had thought about that but apart from that it was absolutely fine the whole process was fine. It was good.

## C

And if you had any advice for someone who was just about to start that resettlement process what would you give them?

## Alex

Erm research all your options for what you want to do with your resettlement and the miniature amount of money you can get and stuff and what you can use your learning credits and stuff because I think people just go right I think I will just do this course that CTP offer you know I will do the project management thing or I will do the Bristol Business School thing or something like that and there is probably some I don't know some interesting things that you could do. I would yeh just be really thoughtful about what you want to do with your money it doesn't necessarily need to be a project management course unless you really think that is really what you want to use so, just do some research and use your time and money really well and do something that interests you because anyway I did my APMP through Shrivenham actually so I managed to do it for free but it was bloody boring and I wouldn't liked to have paid money to do that.  You kind of I know people are focused on providing for their families or continuing money to come in and trying to get the right qualifications to get them out there but this is a really good opportunity to do something that you are interested in, so you want to enjoy it as well and not see it as just another clog in the process of getting another job and moving out of the RAF.  So that would be my thought on the whole subject.10:54

## C

I know it is early days really but what would you say is there anything that you miss about the military at this point?

## Alex

No, no but not in a bad way so, I am still on we had like a WhatsApp group with the guys I used to work with and I went with this last day out with them, in London and I went with them and met them there and they gave me my leaving gift which was about 3 months too late or whatever, and which I had to carry around for the rest of the day which was nice but I am still in a WhatsApp group with them and sometimes I see the banter and stuff and I miss a bit of that but I said I'd leave the WhatsApp group and they said no no stay on it funny, it’s funny you can laugh at us so I sort of get a little bit of an insight into life and some of the like gripes and trials and tribulations that I see I don't miss those but I suspect they will come with any job you know people always wind you up and stuff but no I don't miss going into Northwood every day I don't miss people in the RAF because I keep in touch with friends I want to keep in touch with.  One of the things that has annoyed me about this reservist job is if I have to put back on the uniform that would really piss me off.  Stupid hair nets, I threw all of those out I was like yeh they are all going in the bin.  So, I don't miss that I don't miss that routine and that kind of stuff but then I've stuff here that I am interested in and friends in the village and all that kind of stuff.  So busy yeh and not in a bad way you know if we want to stop at 5 o'clock in the evening then we will stop working at 5 o'clock in the evening but I kind of like working anyway so that is fine

## C

Does your military experience still influence you on a day today basis, how you go about doing things and conducting yourself?

## Alex

yeh, I find I like to research all the options I still I guess like to follow a business case so if we are doing something in the house I'll want to see what the options are, what the costs are and what the pros and cons are there is that kind of way of doing things is definitely what I like to do.  I still like to, it’s probably still normal stuff that normal people do anyway.  But I am going to London tomorrow to see some art thingy a friend has organised it anyway no idea so I will have everything ready to go packed the bag or whatever the night before so when I get up I just go in the morning.  Now I don't think that is normal but it is what I learnt I had to do when I was in the RAF.  Get everything ready to go so when you get up in the morning you can just you know go and you have got no faffing about.  No, my husband was in the Army and he doesn't do that he will get up in the morning and be running around looking for everything so, I don't know is that just something that I had to learn to do to be more organised or whether it was whatever, maybe it was something they taught at Cranwell.

## C

Clothes then actually you mentioned the idea of going back into a reservist job and putting your uniform on wouldn't be hugely appealing, why is that do you think?

## Alex

Well it is just completely I don't like wearing those awful clothes I hate that skirt I hate wearing like court shoes, tights they cost a small fortune to wear, don't they?  I just like, its petty really but I kind like choosing to wear what I want not some God-awful nylon uniform that someone is providing that doesn't fit properly I don't feel that we can interact very well with industry wearing those kinds of clothes because I just think they look at you and think, what are you wearing? What is that awful plastic handbag you are carrying with you.  Dress uniform looks quite smart but just the day to day stuff I don't rate, I don't rate as a credible outfit to face normal people in everyday life in.

## C

So, what about your behaviour and your clothes now have you found that it has that changed in any way since you have left?

## Alex

No, cause we are working on the house all the time.  I used to take the piss out of people that wear what I call 'active wear' all day but because we are always going up a ladder or doing something dirty I just tend to wear like sports leggings, even though I am not doing any sport and a T-Shirt and a jumper.  Yeh I am one of those people that wears active wear.

## C

But you are active so we will

## Alex

yeh practical, certainly more practical than jeans to work in.  But yeh so like today I will nip in and get something for my husband and maybe I will pop into Waitrose on the way back, I will be wondering round in legging and scabby trainers and I bet people think Oh I bet she hasn't been to the gym.

## C

What has been the most striking thing about leaving that you weren't expecting?

## Alex

I think just generally less stressed and grotty and sleeping better and all that kind of stuff. So, I just thought I don't know yeh I just feel a lot more chilled out but that is because I don't have to have a job at the moment.  So, I don't if I was bouncing from one job to another that might be a bit different mighten it, I don't know. That's to come I guess.  So, if you get a bit threaders with the whole thing threaders with the organisation I was working with and my line management there and stuff so all that has gone away and you can think a lot more clearly about what I want to do and all that kind of stuff so that has been more more featured more than I thought it would.  I think if I had had to go from one job directly to the next I would have my judgement would have been hazy or cloudy or perhaps not as clear as it would be since I've had some time to think about it properly rather than being bogged down with one set of things at one work and then going to another job and trying to think about another job, while you are still trying to finish the first job.  So, I guess that would go back to your question about people so if they can afford some time to clear their heads I think that would be really good and think about what they really want to do rather than thinking about what they don't want to do in their current life.

## C

yeh focus on the future rather than where they are at now, so

## Alex

It is amazing how much it frees up in your brain actually,

## C

No having to worry about all those work-related things?

## Alex

yeh definitely

## C

you would think that you have so much to do tin the house do you not find yourself getting stressed about that in anyway, are you doing the project planning of it or

## Alex

yeh I instigated a bit of a Monday morning sit down and what are we going to do in the week kind of thing erm like I need to do this and you generally find you don't finish half of it anyway in the week and whereas previously when I was working away in the week and coming back at the weekend I would like why hasn't this been done?  why hasn't his been done? but because I am here all the time I can see why stuff hasn't been done.  And I have got ownership of why it hasn't been done as well.  So, but we have got some stuff we are going to finish before September because I am going to be working in September again and we kind of need to make sure the house is warm this winter.  This winter, las winter it was fucking freezing. So, as we are having the roof done we will put all the insulation in the loft that is brilliant we have got some doors to put on I've got some tiling to do in here cause I just have a dirty concrete floor which I have had for a long time now so I need to tile down here and the bathroom upstairs.  So, there are some things I want to get done before the bad weather starts again.  It is a real influence on the house it is amazing how much more productive you are in summer against the winter with the longer days and all that type of stuff and we have got two dogs to walk again so in winter you have to finish as I don't know 3 o'clock 3.30 to get out and walk the dogs before it gets dark cause I will never find then in the dark and so yeh we have got some stuff to do before winter starts

## C

It’s kind of a push I suppose

## Alex

And yeh I have learnt that projects when you do them yourself take so much longer than you can imagine cause life gets in the way as well, we are going on a last year we hardly saw any friends over the summer because we we always here at the weekends doing the house going away with friends kind of meant something didn't move on in the house and that was more important so this summer we have got a few weekends where we are going to do stuff and we are going away on a family holiday with my sister in law and her husband and my husband and his sister so that is we wouldn't have done that last year but we are can enjoy a bit more of life this year as well but still keeping our eye on the ball.

## C

A few of my questions relate to going back to work so they are not quite relevant yet but what do you think could be your biggest challenge professionally going back into the work place? 21:58

## Alex

I guess it’s understanding the new organisations values that kind of thing how they work that is one thing that worries me I see these jobs and I am like how will I know how to do all of that, because if I saw a job advertised in the RAF I'd know how everything works and how the system works so I think the challenge for me would be to understand how the system of the new organisation works.  I'd know who to go to to sort out pay I'd know what they meant by a lot of the titles in the job specs and stuff but some of the civilian ones you don't.  Ohh what have they got set up already how would that work how do they hold their meetings, you know do they do minutes just really simple things I think and how they organisation works. Not I am fully confident in my ability to do stuff but how does it fit in with how their organisation works I think would be a challenge.

## C

You mentioned you get yourself all packed up before you go away the next day but is there anything else that skills that the military has taught you that you are finding useful at this point?

## Alex

Well I did the movements course so lifting and carrying has been quite useful, I've got a thousand slates to carry up each side of the roof.  've got arms now but I have got shoulder muscles and stuff.  Yeh I think lots of practical skills that I probably wouldn't have had if I hadn't done practical jobs in the military.  How to use >@?@ you know you wouldn't know how to use ratchet straps I wouldn't have known how to use them, tools even, engines that kind of stuff.  Certainly, doing the movements course has been very useful for doing the house and stuff. So yeh there are some practical skills that I have learnt.  And spread sheets budgeting I don't know.

## C

All the planning side of it.  ….

## Alex

I have a little note book that goes Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday that sits on the fridge and on their goes what we plan to do although it tends to drop down anyway.  What we are going to eat and what we are going to do in the week.  If there is anything going on in the village or that kind of stuff.

## C

It is hard to know whether that is something you have got from the military or if that is something you would have had anyway.  But when I meet civilian friends I see how scatter gun their lives can be sometimes I do think there is something in it.  Perhaps we were already that way inclined and that is why we liked the military.

## Alex

Oh, I wasn't I was really disorganised I wouldn't have thought of getting everything ready for the next day previously but then I was only 21 so I didn't really have any need to as a student and stuff and I dosed around a bit at university so I guess the military taught me to buck up my ideas and be a bit more organised.

## C

So, on a personal front are there any specific challenges you have had to deal with yet?

## Alex

No, I don't think so it is generally all good.  It is nice being together all the time, most of the time.  Although normally I would come back on the Friday and he would scurry around and pick everything upon whatever or quickly slam the dishwasher on before I got in so I'd like to see a bit more organised I don't want clothes every day.  Its general husband and wife gripes isn't and I would put everything in the dish washer when everything is done.  So, I'm like why do you leave shit lying around all the time just fucking pick it up.  So, there is that but I see it every day rather than 2 days a week. So, I get a bit threaders with that I'm just I spend half of my day picking your shit up.  I say you are eating into my life.

*general chat*

>>>>>> think about these things when you are choosing a man.  That is something I would tell people.  Think about whether you can live with a messy person or not.

## C

So, would you say you still consider yourself part of the military family?

## Alex

I guess so because once you've left you have always been in it haven't you. So, you have always got that thing about you and stuff I haven't had that many situations where people have said to me what do you do or whatever.  Cause I noticed when my husband retired he would first start off with well I've just left the Army, well that is not what you do.  That is what you did so it is kind of like, I haven't had to deal with that much of that yet because most people know that I have left so you don't have to start from scratch so most people I meet I just oh I am not working I am looking for a job in September time I am having some time off to do this mess here.  So yeh what was the question?

## C

Repeat question.  Have you joined any associations or anything like that?

## Alex

No, I used to do RAFFA stuff when I was in but I am going to the TSW association I've always been member of that so they have got a dinner on at the end of the month which I am quite looking forward to because I can wear my own dress, I've got an issue with the uniform I have a massive issue with the uniform haven't I.  So yeh I will wear my own dress and it will be very exciting and it will be nice to see everybody so yes that will be quite cool.

## C

So, what would you say motivates you know compared to when you were in the military?

## Alex

Em Well am just a bit more in control of my own life now so the motivation to do stuff is for me and for me alone not for a bunch of ungrateful people that I work with who won’t particularly thank me except for spending half an hour writing my OJAR.  I mean my last OJAR that I was having on leaving there was all of a sudden oh eh you need to have one and I got this WhatsApp message asking if I could write my final OJAR, so I wrote my final OJAR on myself. Oh they said make it as good as you like cause you never know you might want a job in the reserves one day and low and behold two months later I am like where is my OJAR? and I am still trying to get hold of it to send in with this job application yeh so that is to me just absolutely typical of the organisation that I worked for it just like oh yeh an OJAR do you want to write one?  You can give yourself a really good one.  Fucking thank you! Thank you so much.

## C

It’s not very getting your leaving present 3 months late, having to do that it just makes you think the organisation doesn't value you and what you have done.

## Alex

yeh it does.  I mean I looked after the guy that was coming in to take over from me so I made sure he knew what, he was a newly promoted Squadron Leader so I was like look do this job for a year and then go and find somewhere that will look after you, if you see what I mean because these people will not look after your career particularly well they will tick all the boxes by writing your OJAR and MPAR when they are supposed to be done by because that is  something that someone will check up on with them but you won’t it will be hard work to get good quality and get them to be concerned about your career so that was the bit of advice I gave him which, he will be fine that is great that was one of my big worries was handing over to some other poor person in the RAF who was just going to get fucked off.  So yeh I had to give it to the next person.

## C

So, for now it is really just about looking after yourself really and getting your house sorted.

## Alex

yeh getting the house a bit more liveable so that when we come to go back to work in September we are not still living with a concrete floor and this really old looking bathroom suite upstairs that is falling off the wall and stuff like that so you know we have got 2 bedrooms now so we can have people to stay which is cool so yeh it is just about getting thigs done so life can be more nice really to come home to and stuff.

## C

In terms of going back to work you mentioned a little bit about getting used to an organisation but is there anything else that concerns you about going back to work?

## Alex

I don't think so It will be nice to meet some people. I don't want to I will probably want to work in Bristol, it won’t be nice driving into Bristol.  That concerns me I have lived in Bristol and driven into Bristol and that is shit so living outside Bristol and driving into Bristol will be shit I reckon and there is not good trainline or anything.  So yeh just commuting, I'm not a big fan of commuting.  Is there anything else that concerns me?  No, I look forward to earning some money again so that will be quite nice.  You know we are not hard up by any means but it would be nice to have some of that but it doesn't worry me for now because it has all been budgeted in.  I don't mind working, it would be nice not to but unfortunately the lottery win hasn't come in.33:26

## C

As you look to the future where do you think you will be in 5 years’ time?

## Alex

Hopefully living in a nice house, hopefully doing the garden in a few years’ time.  Having a job that I enjoy or that isn't that bad let’s put it that way but that at least earns a decent amount of money and gives me some kind of job satisfaction, so maybe the first job won’t do that.  That is what they say in CTP isn't it, that your first job may not be the thing for you. So yeh if I think about having a direction for my career or maybe or maybe just running this dog grooming business perhaps that could be the other option, see how that goes over time cause it would be nice to be.  That would really be master of your own destiny then if you are running your own business then if I want to work harder I'll earn more money effectively where if you are salaried you work hard you might get better recognition I guess but you certainly won’t get any more money for the extra time you put in so yeh just having a direction that I am comfortable with that I feel that I am driving34:48.

C

So, is there anything else you would like to say about the whole leaving process, how it made you feel or anything you would change about it?

## Alex

Well I genuinely think it is really good and a couple a friend of mine she is over in the states actually she said the other week or she messaged me and said she had put her papers in and what were my thoughts on the whole process.  And I said well I think it is really good the way it allows you to peter away from work effectively so you sort of do a bit of resettlement then you are in for a few weeks then you go back and realise the world is not going to stop because you are not there and you know I just think it takes you if you did it properly and planned your time out it takes you away from that whole system in a slow transitional manner really and you get to go on various workshops and things with likeminded people so you know you are not the only one other people are doing the same thing, you know everyone is leaving.  Everyone is going in a million directions and there is no there is no right way or wrong way to go once you have left it’s just not the end of the world so I think it is actually one of the really good things about the military is their transition process.36:07

(chat off line)

Wraps up interview. 37:21