



Andy Maskell, MAHRI

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Education

During Year 12 I decided to leave school and work in the Navy as a writer. I departed Camperdown in country Victoria and started my navy career at HMAS Cerberus at Crib Point in Victoria in 1995. My training lasted seven months and included general military training and clerical training.

As part of on the job training I have been awarded a Diploma in Government (Management) last year and in 2005 finished a Diploma in Management and a Diploma in Administration. I have recently started a Graduate Diploma in Management (Human Resources) at the University of New South Wales at the Australian Defence Force Academy in Canberra.

First job

After my training I was transferred to Canberra as an

administration assistant in a navy weapons project office. It was a junior role in a HR capacity. It was quite daunting and even though I had been with the Navy for seven months it was the first time I really had to take initiative and make the job what I wanted.

I landed my first real HR job in 1996 and was transferred to HMAS Cerberus as a payroll administrator. I looked after 600 trainee members and we constantly had people coming on and off the books, when they had completed their training and were transferred or promoted. It was demanding but rewarding and prepared me for my first sea posting in 1997.

Why HR?

I wanted to work with people where I could see I was achieving something, whether it is assisting with pay, career development, entitlements or personal development.

My work is different to normal HR in that I work on retaining members rather than recruiting staff. This is important considering the current work skills shortage and the boom of the mining industry in Western Australia that is luring workers.

I also like the clerical side of HR because as it is structured and easy from a process basis to provide a high level of service.

Current Duties

For the next 18 months I have been posted to a different job, providing executive support for the Warrant Officer of the Navy within Navy headquarters in Canberra. It's an exciting and rewarding role that offers me

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access to my organisation's senior leadership. I deal with high-level policies and briefs, requiring me to focus at a higher strategic level than I would if employed in my normal core duties.

Before this job I saw change to be slow but after six months in this role I understand the processes better. I now realise the organisation is embracing change management and moving forward—which is a great thing.

Challenges

Being posted to Iraq for six months last year has been my biggest challenge so far. I was the chief clerk for the Australian National Headquarters and in charge of the HR of all personnel deployed in that headquarters. My staff and I looked after payroll, induction programs, accommodation, visiting VIPs, mentoring other deployed administration staff and liaising with foreign correspondents and the day-to-day administration for the headquarters. It was a job that encompassed many aspects and was the first time I had worked jointly with the Navy, Army and Air Force. It was a great opportunity to diversify my management techniques and HR processes to achieve our common goals.

I lived on a US base. I look back and I can't believe that I worked and lived in Iraq. There were definitely some potentially dangerous and stressful situations but I had the utmost confidence in our people and their leadership. This job certainly provided a number of professional and personal

challenges, and is one that I would definitely do again.

Lessons

As I have progressed through the ranks I have learnt people are important and we have to do the utmost to retain our members. In applying policy I tend to think more about the impact on a member or group of people, and work to find a solution that works for both parties.

Professional development

Through my training I have attained three diplomas and now I am working towards a graduate diploma. I joined AHRI in April and attended the National Convention in Sydney. I am a professional member of AHRI with the intent to be a fellow in the future. Being a member gives me a wider network of contacts, and has exposed me to a world of HR outside of Defence. Attending the AHRI National Convention allowed me to socialise and network with members from different organisations, and to investigate further professional development options.

10-year-plan

I'd like to complete a Masters in Management (HR) and to focus on policy management with the view to drafting more policy, and being more active in the consultation and reviewing processes. I would also like to look at entering the commercial sector.

I look forward to continuing to attend AHRI workshops and conferences and working towards achieving my fellowship.

Andy Maskell spoke with Christine Antoniou.