BOSTONENERGY

TRANSITIONING FROM THE UK ARMED FORCES INTO THE WIND ENERGY SECTOR

FACE A NEW CHALLENGE.

JOIN A NEW TEAM.

INTRODUCTION TO THE WIND ENERGY SECTOR

The wind energy sector in the UK and North-West Europe is booming. This is largely due to Government investments and targets that will help reduce emissions, helping us stay on track to hit the UK's target to become carbon neutral by 2050.

Significant investments are being made into wind farms. In fact, the World's biggest windfarm, is under construction off the East Coast of England. This investment has created thousands of jobs, and many more will follow, so it is an exciting and fast-growing industry to work in.

The industry requires a wide variety of roles, which we will discuss in this booklet; there are significant opportunities for UK Armed forces personnel transitioning to get involved in the Wind Industry.

OUR AIM IS TO GIVE YOU DETAILS ABOUT THE TYPES OF ROLES AVAILABLE WITHIN THE INDUSTRY AND COURSES YOU WILL NEED TO TAKE OR CONSIDER. FURTHER RESEARCH INTO THE INDUSTRY WOULD BE REQUIRED FOR A WIDER UNDERSTANDING BUT THIS BOOKLET WILL PROVIDE YOU WITH A STARTING POINT.

JOB ROLES IN THE SECTOR

Below is a breakdown of several job types and roles that you can expect within the industry. There are many variations of the 'Wind Turbine Technician'.

PRE-ASSEMBLY TECHNICIAN

These technicians are embedded in a specialist project team on the dockside or a specific site. Their primary duties include the assembly of wind turbine components in preparation for their shipment and installation. All works will be conducted in line with each project's requirements.

INSTALLATION/ CONSTRUCTION TECHNICIAN

These teams generally spend a lot of time away working rotational work patterns and are responsible for the erection/building of the wind farm. They are not necessarily employed by the manufacturer (OEMs) but are subcontracted in during the construction phase. Once the task is complete, they will then move onto the next project.

COMMISSIONING TECHNICIAN

Usually employed by the manufacturer/O&Ms of the turbines who will run the site after construction, a Wind Turbine Commissioning Technician is part of a permanently employed team. This team will be dedicated to a particular project and will be responsible for the commissioning of wind turbines in line with safety guidelines, project requirements, corporate methods, and industry legislative standards. Again, these technicians will complete one project and then move onto the next one.

SERVICE TECHNICIAN

These technicians are responsible for the day to day running of a wind farm. They provide first-line operation and maintenance of the turbines. Their scope of work ranges from fault finding, major and minor component repair to regular servicing at intervals deemed by the manufacturer. This role can either be site based, within a set area where the technician is home every night or as a 'Travel Technician'. These technicians have essentially no base but travel around visiting different sites, both on and offshore.

MAJOR COMPONENT/ SPECIAL TASK TECHNICIAN

Employed by the turbine manufacturer, this is a specialist role where the team is solely responsible for repairing or replacing major components on the turbine. For example, replacing a damaged blade, generator or gearbox. They tend to travel and live away during their shift but some companies may have these teams work on a rotational basis.

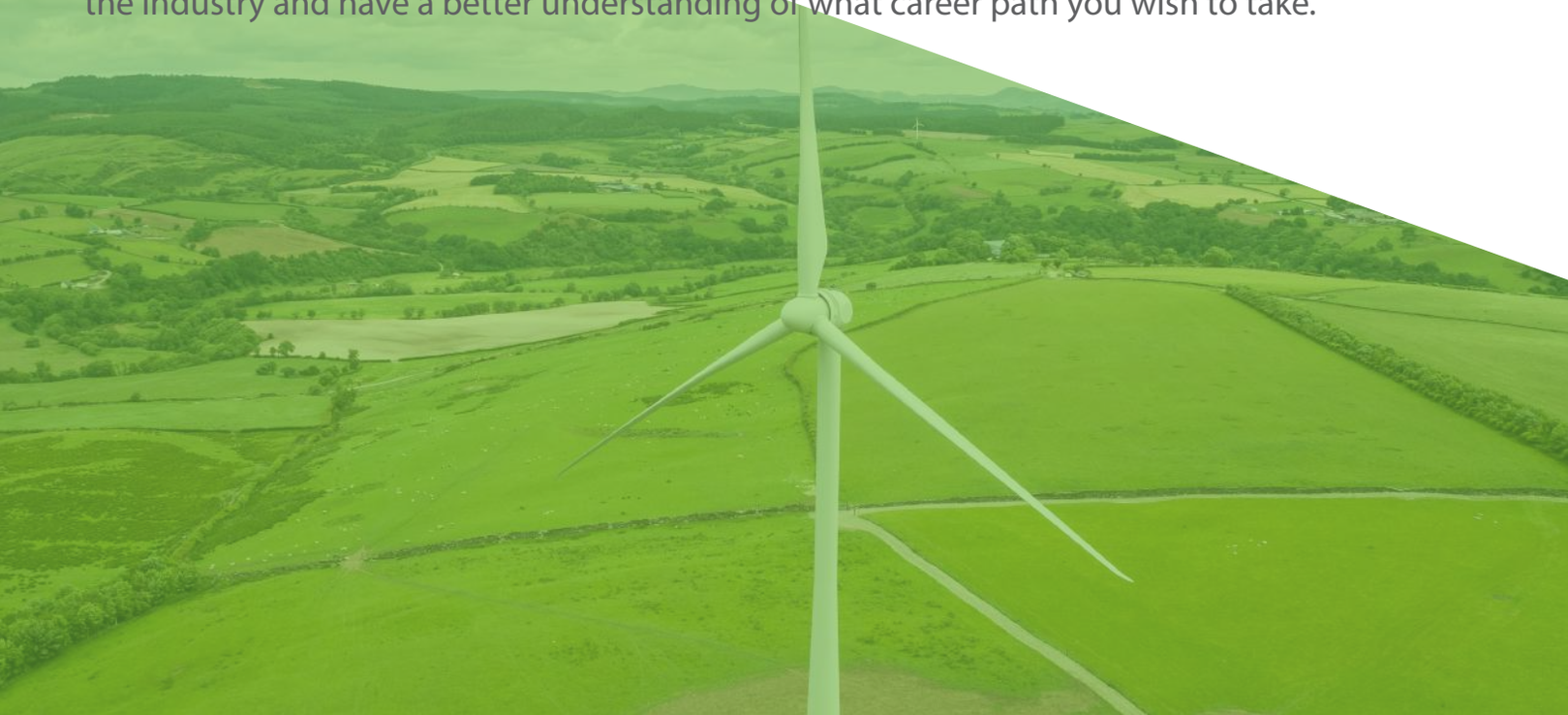
BLADE TECHNICIAN

These technicians can either be employed by the manufacturer of the turbine or, in most cases, by contracting companies who visit sites all over the country to repair damage to the blades. They either work on ropes or elevated work platforms. This work, depending on location, can be very seasonal, especially in the UK with its inclement winters.

STATUTORY INSPECTION TECHNICIAN

These technicians are responsible for the inspections of internal safety and lifting equipment within the turbines. They inspect internal lifts, electric cranes/hoists, ladders, attachment points, and fire extinguishers – to name a few. This role is travel based and will require living away during the shift/rotation to visit sites wherever your employer sends you.

There are other specialist roles (For example High Voltage Authorised Persons etc) within the industry but it is unlikely, coming out of the forces, that you will ascertain these sorts of roles without prior experience. Like any career, it is something to work towards once you are within the industry and have a better understanding of what career path you wish to take.



INITIAL TRAINING COURSES

During your resettlement phase, there are plenty of options from ELCAS approved training providers that offer industry-specific training.

The basic courses required, before you are able to enter a wind turbine are as follows:

GWO BASIC SAFETY TRAINING COURSE (5 MODULES)

- Working at Height (2 days)
- First Aid (2 Days)
- Fire Awareness (1/2 Day)
- Manual Handling (1/2 Day)
- Sea Survival (2 Days) – Only required for offshore

RUK/GWO MEDICAL (INCLUDING CHESTER STEP TEST)

Most training providers can provide medicals as part of your package so check with them upon booking your training. Please be aware that it needs to be an approved RUK/GWO clinic. A medical certificate is valid for two years and combines the following tests as part of our examination process:

- Completion of Patient Questionnaire
- Consultation with a doctor
- Urinalysis – routine urine test with an immediate result
- BMI – a measurement of height, weight, and calculation of Body Mass Index
- Visual acuity and visual fields test
- Pulse and Blood Pressure Measurement
- Lung Function Test
- Audiogram (hearing test)
- Chester Step Test

GWO BTT - BASIC TECHNICAL TRAINING

This training is part of the Global Wind Organisation course portfolio and is relatively new. It has been introduced to standardise the industry so every new technician will receive the same basic technical training, regardless of who they work for. It is an entry-level course and has different modules covering electrical, mechanical and hydraulic training, along with safety, and safe working practices specific to the wind industry. This is the first stage of a training program and from here you can conduct your employer's turbine specific training courses.

TECHNICAL TRAINING COURSES

SGTT - SIEMENS GAMESA TECHNICAL TRAINING

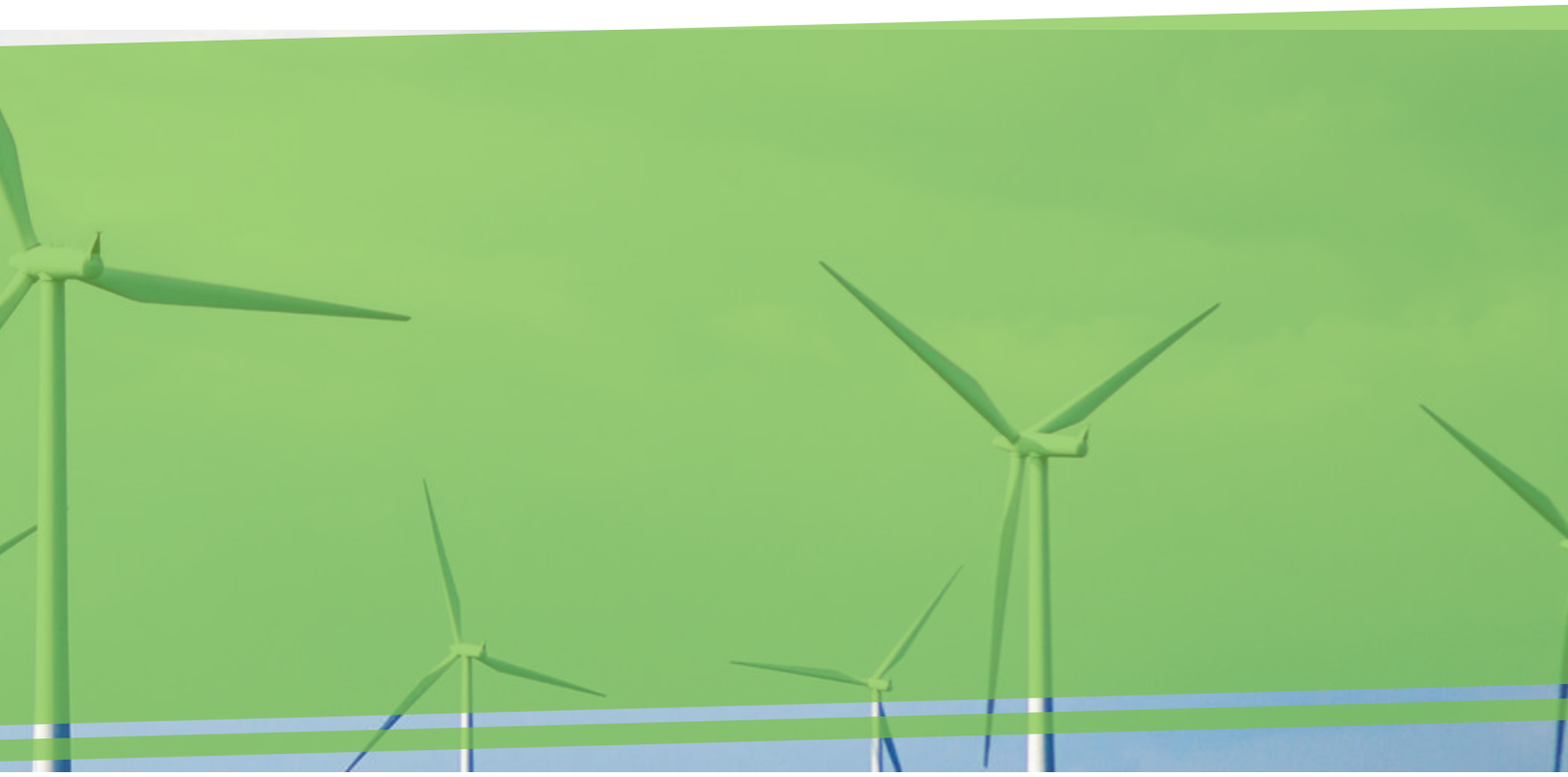
This training is intended for Siemens Gamesa employees, customers, and 3rd parties. All attendees can only take part via an approved Siemens Gamesa supplier. The course provides practical training in the following subjects –

- Siemens Gamesa Energy Isolations Procedures (EIP), used to perform Lock-Out Tag-Out (LOTO) on mechanical, electrical and hydraulic parts.
- The safety and competent preparation, use, maintenance and inspection of the different types of Hand tools used in Siemens Gamesa.
- Retrieving and effective use of the Siemens Gamesa technical procedures and manuals.
- Bolt tightening, shimming techniques and use of tools specific to Siemens Gamesa.
- Cabling types and techniques used in Siemens Gamesa turbines.

IRATA ROPE ACCESS LEVEL 1

This training will only be required if you wish to venture into the blade repair sector of the industry. There are plenty of companies that offer ELCAS approved training for this, which covers both the rope access and GWO training together. The rope access work involved is tower cleaning and painting, blade inspection and repair.

Bear in mind that an IRATA Rope Access Level 1 course costs approx. £600 and only qualifies you to work as a trainee under supervision. You will technically be subject to a refresher if no hours are gained within any 6-month period and it is subject to a full reassessment/expiry after 3 years.



BANKSMAN SLINGER

This course will train you in the principles of banking a crane, using the correct forms of hand and radio signals. It will also train you in the correct slinging of different types of loads and advice on relevant safety precautions to abide by when working with cranes and loads.

The course is a mix of both theoretical and practical assessment, during which you will be required to demonstrate a sound knowledge and understanding of the training programme.

BLADE REPAIR

For technicians wishing to get into blade repairs, this training is required. Certain employers may also require a different type of training. Siemens Gamesa, for instance, have their own blade training qualification.

CSCS / CCNSG SAFETY PASSPORT

The CSCS card is provided for workers in the construction industry generally, although there are affiliated cards that cover different trades. The CCNSG Safety Passport is specifically for those who work in the engineering construction industry. Consequently, the one required for a particular site may depend on the job in question and the individual site operator. As a general rule, it is better to have a specialised card that reflects the relevant work rather than a more generalised version.

Each of the schemes has an obvious safety element and the award of a CSCS card requires the applicant to pass a Health, Safety & Environment Test or have a qualification that provides the equivalent. The CCNSG Safety Passport, however, involves a two-day training course followed by a test that provides the whole qualification.

DURATIONS OF WORK

UK & EU

GERMANY

Usually from March to the end of September (offshore). Onshore may be longer as it is not weather and water/vessel transfer dependent.

UK

Usually from February to October. Some sites can continue throughout the winter months, but that is heavily dependent on need and skill of the person.

HOLLAND

February to September on service offshore, sometimes extended into October for the main campaigns. Some work can then extend on across winter also. Onshore assembly is all year round.

PAY RATES AND CONTRACTS

Technicians work as temporary contractors on the majority of works in the UK and Europe, on PAYE (pay as you earn). Therefore, you are not paid when you are not working.

The contract is an annualised hours agreement whereby you are paid a salary equivalent to working approx. 160hrs per month. Not all contracts shut down so sometimes work continues and a technician can "bank" hours. If they bank a good portion of their pay – as many do in the UK on 2/1 rotations – then winter is a rest period where a wage can be drawn from banked hours. Basically, the more work is done, the more that can be earned.

Work in Germany does tend to be more 2/2 rotations – achieving say 168hrs per month. Not much is banked from the worked hours, so this should be taken into consideration.

NEXT STEPS

As you have seen, there are a variety of roles and courses available in the wind energy sector. Gaining advice from other sources is also highly recommended.

Social Media platforms such as LinkedIn are a great way to network with people already working within the industry. Set up a profile and start connecting with industry professionals in your preferred area of work.

Add recruiters, ex forces personnel and technicians - don't be afraid to message these new connections, explain your situation and ask for advice. They may have a different perspective or inside knowledge of recruitment within various companies.

All of this information cannot be taken as gospel, others may have a different opinion or approach. You will be able to find your way with some research and networking.

Boston Energy is a division of the Bostonair Group. Created in 2012, Boston Energy's services to the wind energy sector span six main areas:

- **Manpower:** Recruitment and Temporary Labour Services including the supply of Wind Turbine Service Technicians.
- **Pre-assembly:** Supplying Tower Technicians and Foremen.
- **Crane and Lifting equipment O&M:** Including HMF and other crane brands such as HIAB.
- **Engineering Support:** Including Spares Management, Troubleshooting, Component Exchange and Service Scheduling.
- **Statutory Inspections:** Including LOLER, PUWER. Eye Bolt, Ladders and Fire Extinguishers.
- **Technical Training:** Including GWO Courses: Fire Awareness, First Aid, Manual Handling and Working at Height. Other courses include; Slinger Banksmen, DAVIT, HMF, HIAB and Palfinger.

Boston Energy's technicians are a highly skilled combination of the Group's aviation workforce, those recruited from light or heavy mechanical and electrical industries, or from maintenance and skilled Military backgrounds.

These technicians are then trained through client approved Technical Training courses and to GWO standards, they are then made available to meet peaks in customer workload.

For more information visit www.bostonenergy.co.uk

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