

From the Service to the sector

A step-by-step guide for logistics service leavers: name what you did, find the civilian equivalent and put it on a CV. Built on the Royal Navy's own published role descriptions.

Kelroy James Royal Navy supply chain, 18 years Role descriptions checked 21 October 2026

 9 min read

Analysis of the Veterans' Survey 2022 (GOV.UK, April 2025) found that just over half of veterans, 52.5%, had at some point taken a job below the level of their last military role. The figure for Royal Navy veterans was 52.8%, and one of the two most cited reasons was that employers did not recognise transferable military skills. The survey is classed as official statistics in development and its sample is self-selected, so the figures indicate a pattern and are best read as a guide.

That reason is a translation problem, and a service leaver can act on it. A title such as Leading Hand, or a task such as a stocktake, means little to a civilian reader, yet the work behind it nearly always has a civilian name. This guide gives a method, a translation of the logistics trades as the Royal Navy publishes them, a translation of the training most logisticians hold, and CV lines to adapt.

The vocabulary is usually the only thing missing. Work through the method on your own tasks, check the result against a published source, and only then decide what training you need.

The method

ABOUT TWENTY MINUTES

ONE

Record what you did

Scope, scale and authority, with the consequence of failure. Write the task precisely, for example "checked each consignment against its paperwork before signing, on an account worth £Xm".

TWO

Say what it verified

What would have gone wrong if you had skipped the task, and who relied on the result?

THREE

Find the civilian name

Match it to the nearest civilian role or control language. A plausible match is enough to start a conversation.

Choose the training

Close the gaps that are real. Leave the ones that are only gaps in vocabulary.

PART 1

Your trade, as the Royal Navy describes it

ROYALNAVY.MOD.UK

ENTRY

Supply Chain Rating

Manages the delivery of vital stores and equipment to Navy personnel worldwide; trains to NVQ level, with an Intermediate Apprenticeship in Warehousing and Storage.

CIVILIAN READING

First-line inventory and supply control: receiving, issuing and recording stock.

SEARCH FOR

Inventory controller, stock controller, stores or warehouse coordinator, supply chain administrator.

FIRST PROMOTION

Leading Hand

Runs a stores account, and sources and allocates key equipment.

CIVILIAN READING (MY READING)

Personal accountability for an account of assets and its record.

SEARCH FOR

Stock control supervisor, inventory team leader, materials coordinator.

SECOND PROMOTION

Petty Officer

Becomes a line manager, mentoring and supporting others.

CIVILIAN READING (MY READING)

Supervising a team and approving the first-line checks it prepares: maker-checker.

SEARCH FOR

Supply chain team leader, section manager, inventory or materials manager.

OFFICER
Logistics Officer
Leads logistics teams across supply chain, personnel and finance, coordinating the movement of supplies and personnel worldwide. Chartered routes include CILT and CIPD.
CIVILIAN READING
Operational management across supply and finance.
SEARCH FOR
Logistics manager, supply chain manager, operations manager.

RATING
Writer
Responsible for HR, legal matters and financial administration for the ship's company.
CIVILIAN READING
People administration and pay.
SEARCH FOR
HR adviser, HR administrator, payroll.

RATING
Catering Services Rating
Runs a commercial kitchen, including ordering, receiving and accounting for provisions.
CIVILIAN READING
Commercial food operations and stock accounting.
SEARCH FOR
Kitchen supervisor, catering manager, food safety lead.

The left column paraphrases the published careers pages (Logistics profession, Supply Chain Rating, Logistics and Personnel Officer, Writer and Catering Services Rating, read on 21 October 2026). Where the civilian reading says "my reading", it is my interpretation and is not on the careers pages. Civilian titles are search terms, and levels vary by employer. The pages describe the role at entry and at each promotion, so what you did at your own level may be wider.

PART 2

Your training, translated

WHAT YOU WERE CERTIFIED TO DO

TRAINING

Stocktaking and stock verification

CIVILIAN NAME

Cycle counting, physical inventory verification, existence and completeness testing, and variance investigation.

WHERE TO LOOK

Inventory control and stock accuracy roles; inventory audit support in finance and audit teams.

TRAINING

Inventory and stores accounting

CIVILIAN NAME

Inventory management, materials management, asset register upkeep and reconciliation of physical stock to records.

WHERE TO LOOK

Inventory controller, materials planner, supply chain analyst. CILT and CIPS routes for progression.

TRAINING

Dangerous goods: air, sea and road

CIVILIAN NAME

Regulated goods compliance: classifying, packing, marking, documenting and moving hazardous cargo.

WHERE TO LOOK

Dangerous goods coordinator, hazmat or DG compliance, freight forwarding DG specialist.

IATA DGR

IMDG Code

ADR

TRAINING

Movements and customs documentation

CIVILIAN NAME

Transport planning, freight forwarding, and import and export compliance.

WHERE TO LOOK

Freight and transport planner, customs compliance, trade compliance.

TRAINING

Supervising contractors and suppliers

CIVILIAN NAME

Supplier and contractor management, and contract governance.

WHERE TO LOOK

Supplier manager, contract manager, third-party risk.

TRAINING Delivering training, for example dangerous goods awareness
CIVILIAN NAME Safety-critical training delivery and competence assurance.
WHERE TO LOOK Training coordinator, compliance trainer.

A note on dangerous goods. IATA requires recurrent training at least every 24 months for air shipments, and an out-of-date certificate means retaking the initial course. For road transport, the statutory Dangerous Goods Safety Adviser is a separate exam-based qualification, with a certificate valid for five years and specific to transport modes, so holding military dangerous goods training does not make you a DGSA. Employers often want a current certificate from an approved civilian provider for the mode they use. Check the current exam and approval arrangements on GOV.UK before you book anything.

PART 3

What you did every month, translated

GENERIC, PUBLIC FRAMEWORKS

ON A UNIT Monthly checks against a standard question set
THE CONTROL Answers a fixed set of control questions, with evidence, and raises exceptions.
IN ASSURANCE Control self-assessment First-line key control testing. COSO monitoring activities

ON A UNIT Approving checks that others prepared
THE CONTROL A second person approves the first person's work.
IN ASSURANCE Maker-checker and supervisory review COSO control activities ISO/IEC 27001 A.5.3

ON A UNIT

Formal handover of an account

THE CONTROL

A certified baseline of the account's condition at each change of custody.

IN ASSURANCE

Custody transfer and handover certification

ISO/IEC 27001 A.5.3

ON A UNIT

Preparing for external inspection

THE CONTROL

Showing that records match the physical state before independent testers arrive.

IN ASSURANCE

Audit readiness and evidence preparation

ISO 19011

ON A UNIT

Inspection findings with an owner and a date

THE CONTROL

Findings tracked to closure, with evidence of closure.

IN ASSURANCE

Issue management and corrective action tracking

ISO 9001 clause 10

ON A UNIT

Escalating losses above a limit

THE CONTROL

Materiality decides who may clear a loss, and the escalation creates the trail.

IN ASSURANCE

Delegated authority and exception reporting

COSO

ON A UNIT
Controlled documents and need-to-know
THE CONTROL
The right version reaches the right people, with a record of who holds it.
IN ASSURANCE
Document control and information classification
ISO/IEC 27001 A.5.12

ON A UNIT
Keeping output going under disruption
THE CONTROL
Continuity is tested by real disruption, not only by the plan.
IN ASSURANCE
Operational resilience and business continuity
ISO 22301

The full fourteen-row version, with the framework references, is in Same Control, Two Vocabularies.

PART 4

Say it on your CV

ADAPT, AND KEEP NUMBERS YOU CAN DEFEND

BEFORE	Maintained stores records and prepared the unit for inspection.
AFTER	Operated first-line inventory controls for an account of £X, reconciling physical stock to records monthly and supporting independent inspection.
BEFORE	Carried out stocktakes.
AFTER	Ran cycle counts and investigated variances to root cause, bringing an account from [state] to [state].
BEFORE	Supervised the section.
AFTER	Led a team of [n], approving the monthly control checks they prepared and escalating exceptions.
BEFORE	Dangerous goods awareness.
AFTER	Held current dangerous goods training for [modes], and delivered awareness training to [n] personnel.

BEFORE

Handed over the account.

AFTER

Certified the account's condition at each change of custody, so ownership passed on a documented baseline.

BEFORE

Dealt with contractors.

AFTER

Oversaw external contractors against contract requirements and verified their work to standard.

PART 5

Other trades

FIRST PASS

Engineering, warfare and healthcare are mapped in outline in Independently Verified Skills Mapping, and communications, personnel and operations are covered in the worksheet. Those mappings have not been checked by people who held the jobs. If you served in one of those trades, run the method on your own work and send me your best translation lines, and I will credit you only with your permission.

SUPPORT

Where to get help

CAREER TRANSITION PARTNERSHIP

The Career Transition Partnership, delivered by Reed in Partnership, supports leavers with transferable-skills identification, CV development, employment fairs and funded training. In most cases support is available from two years before discharge, so check your own eligibility with them. Use the CTP alongside this guide: do the translation first, then choose the course.

Limits of this guide

It is a translation aid for people describing their own experience. The frameworks named are pointers to where an equivalent control is written down, and they are not claims of conformity. Knowing that a handover certificate is a custody transfer control does not make a logistician an auditor, and the civilian job titles are search terms, not equivalence claims.

A caution also applies to the guide itself: naming a control is no evidence that it worked. Keep the figures you can defend in an interview, and say plainly which parts of a role you held.

Keep going

If this was useful, Chain of Custody is the free newsletter where I publish practical supply chain assurance writing: supplier evidence, ownership and hand-offs, and lessons from control failures.

Subscribe free: chainofcustody.beehiiv.com

Send me a task you cannot name, with your trade and rank, and I will help you translate it: kelroydbjames@gmail.com. The latest version of this guide, and the worksheet, are at kelroyjames.com/service-leaver-translation-guide.

Views are my own and drawn from public sources. They do not represent the Royal Navy or the Ministry of Defence.

Sources and scope. Role descriptions paraphrased from the Royal Navy careers pages for the Logistics profession and the Supply Chain Rating, Logistics and Personnel Officer, Writer and Catering Services Rating roles (royalnavy.mod.uk, read 21 October 2026). Veterans' Survey 2022 (GOV.UK, 23 April 2025). IATA Dangerous Goods Regulations recurrent training pages (iata.org). Dangerous Goods Safety Adviser entry, UK regulated professions register (GOV.UK). Career Transition Partnership information from GOV.UK and Reed in Partnership. Civilian framework references are to ISO/IEC 27001:2022, ISO 9001, ISO 19011, ISO 22301, COSO and the IIA Three Lines Model.

Not official. Views are my own and are based on general observations about logistics assurance and skills recognition. They draw only on published sources and do not represent the position of the Royal Navy, the Ministry of Defence or any organisation with which I work. Nothing here reproduces any organisation's internal policy, procedure or assurance output.

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