



Photo courtesy BNSF Railway

## Good Conduct Required

**BNSF Railway military recruiter, Connie McClendon, tells why a career in the rail industry may be right for you.**

### Quick Stats

Name: **Connie McClendon**  
 Title: **Manager, Military Staffing**  
 Company: **Burlington Northern Sante Fe**  
 HQ City: **Fort Worth, Texas**  
 2005 Revenues: **\$13 Billion**  
 Web site: **www.bnsf.com**  
 Email: **connie.mcclendon@bnsf.com**

**B**NSF's subsidiary BNSF Railway Company operates one of the largest railroad networks in North America, with about 32,000 route miles in 28 states and two Canadian provinces. The railway is among the world's top transporters of intermodal traffic, moves more grain than any other American railroad, transports the components of many of the products we depend on daily, and hauls enough low-sulphur coal to generate about 10 percent of the electricity produced in the United States.

**G.I. Jobs..** *What do prior military hires bring to your company that you like?*

**BNSF..** BNSF recognizes the talent associated with U.S. military service. Those with military experience are mission-focused, highly-skilled, motivated, and possess unique experiences, leadership abilities and technical knowledge. The military candidate embodies the core competencies essential at BNSF – leadership, teamwork and the ability to perform safely in a fast-paced, dynamic environment.

**G.I. Jobs..** *What are the most common mistakes you see on military/veteran résumés?*

**BNSF..** Many résumés are presented as job descriptions or generic overviews of the candidate's professional experience and credentials versus a customized, value-added

approach targeted to the specific job. In addition, some résumés tend to undervalue the candidate's accomplishments and instead overly focus on responsibilities held.

Sell yourself by showing the recruiter what you have accomplished in quantitative terms. For example: In my role as petty officer second class in the aviation maintenance department, I accomplished x, y and z.

**G.I. Jobs..** *What types of positions does your company recruit military for?*

**BNSF..** Due to shifting demographics and associated large-scale retirements, BNSF seeks to fill about 3,000 positions in 2006. This effort is a continuation of the aggressive hiring initiative launched in mid-2003. We are seeking to fill positions, in operations primarily. From management and first-line supervisors to conductors and track maintenance, BNSF is looking for employees with a variety of skills and experiences to work on our railway.



Connie McClendon

**G.I. Jobs..** *Describe one of these positions (responsibilities, daily duties, working hours etc).*

**BNSF..** Rail conductors supervise over-the-road operation of freight trains, handling responsibilities such as pre- and post-trip planning, restrictions and speed requirements for each individual train, Federal Railroad Administration compliance, and overall safe and appropriate movement of their train. Conductors are in demand throughout the railroad industry.

**G.I. Jobs..** *What issues/surprises do you find that military transitioners/veterans need to be aware of when entering the civilian workforce?*



**BNSF..** Military candidates need to know they will be competing for jobs alongside many other candidates. Therefore, they must take advantage of career services such as résumé writing, interviewing skills and job search techniques offered by the transition assistance programs (TAP and ACAP) in order to maximize their opportunities.

**On freight trains, conductors DO NOT take tickets. Instead, they are responsible for:**

- The overall operation of their train
- All train documentation
- Any restrictions existing in their train
- Speed requirements of their train
- Track restrictions of their train
- Classification of their train
- Pre-trip planning
- Post-trip planning

**As part of their job, they also:**

- Verify the placement of cars on their train
- Inspect for hazardous material cars
- Inspect for FRA requirements on their equipment
- Meet tonnage requirements for their train
- Verify signals
- Switch Lines
- Pick up and set out cars from their train
- Assist in picking up and setting out locomotives from their train

Conductors must have the ability to work on-call 24 hours per day, seven days per week. They work outdoors in a variety of weather conditions, travel to job sites around the area, and remain on-site perhaps for days

at a time. Weekend and holiday work is required.

**G.I. Jobs..** *What is the average starting pay for this position?*

**BNSF..** Conductor salaries are among the highest entry-level positions in the industry. Conductors earn an average of about \$67,000.

**G.I. Jobs..** *Describe the benefits of this position (health care, retirement, vacation, etc).*

**BNSF..** BNSF employees receive annual benefit packages averaging about \$23,000, in addition to base compensation.

**G.I. Jobs..** *Describe a typical career progression for this position?*

**BNSF..** Conductors may choose career paths leading to locomotive engineer service or railroad management.

**G.I. Jobs..** *How many military veterans work in your company and what percent of the total workforce does this comprise?*

**From management and first-line supervisors to conductors and track maintenance, BNSF is looking for employees with a variety of skills and experiences to work on our railway.**

**BNSF..** In 2005 alone, BNSF hired over 750 veterans. We are on our way to surpassing that number by a wide margin in 2006.

**G.I. Jobs..** *Did any of the senior executives in your company serve in the military?*

**BNSF..** Many of our executives are veterans including John Lanigan, executive vice president and chief marketing officer. John is a U.S. Coast Guard Academy graduate and served in the Coast Guard on both active and reserve duty for a total of 20 years. ★



**Dig deeper @ [www.gijobs.net](http://www.gijobs.net)**

- Chat with Connie McClendon on Wed, May 24 @ 9pm EST.
- Full Archives of past Recruiter Intels.
- For a complete list of Q&As go to [www.gijobs.net/recruiterintel](http://www.gijobs.net/recruiterintel)