



2011



A letter from The Rt Hon David Cameron – The Prime Minister



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

31 March 2011

THE PRIME MINISTER

Dear Neil

Thank you for your kind invitation to contribute to the Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme biennial brochure.

At a time when our Armed Forces are working tirelessly to ensure the safety of our country now and for future generations, it is imperative that legislators and policy makers have a clear understanding and hands on knowledge of the roles, rigour and functions of the Armed Forces.

The Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme continues to provide a unique opportunity for Members of both Houses to gain this insight, and I commend everyone involved in the Scheme for all their hard work. The Scheme provides a beneficial experience of life in the Armed Forces that enables participation in Parliament from a position of familiarity.

It is our duty to understand, assist and remain informed of the challenges our Forces face. I know that many Noble Lords, Right Honourable and Honourable Members have taken part in this Scheme, and have found it fulfilling and worthwhile. I would encourage those who have the opportunity to take part, to do so.

*Yours
David*

Sir Neil Thorne OBE TD DL



Rt Hon Ed Miliband MP – Leader of the Opposition

Every day our Armed Forces commit heroic acts of bravery in our name. They do so to defend our national security and interests, but also to protect those whose names and stories we do not know. At a time when our Forces are being asked to do more overseas in a radically and fast-changing security landscape it has never been more important for Parliamentarians to understand the challenges they face. The Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme provides an invaluable opportunity to gain an insight into the unique lives and experiences of our Servicemen and women.

On becoming Leader of the Opposition I made it a priority of mine to meet those serving on the frontline in Afghanistan. Their bravery and professionalism was humbling and inspiring. Understanding their work is vital to ensuring Forces' interests are protected by Parliament, the military covenant is strengthened and the whole Forces community receives the support they deserve. It is my priority that the welfare of the Services is enhanced and the best equipment is made available to the frontline.

At a time when fewer Members of Parliament have direct experience of life in the Forces, the AFPS is vital for encouraging informed debate and decision-making and championing defence within Parliament. I would like to thank Sir Neil Thorne for his crucial work, congratulate him on his achievements and wish all involved in the Scheme well for the future.



“... the AFPS is vital for encouraging informed debate and decision-making ...”



Foreword by The Rt Hon Dr Liam Fox MP – Secretary of State for Defence

I write at a time when our Armed Forces are engaged in high intensity operations in Afghanistan and Libya, which, not surprisingly, have significant media coverage. However, what is less recognised and understood is that our forces are also contributing to anti-piracy operations off the coast of Africa; are providing training to our allies across the globe; are undertaking a broad range of Defence Diplomacy tasks in support of our wider security policy; are providing active and on-standby support for the Civil Authorities across the UK; and if they are not already involved in one of those activities then they are most likely preparing to do so.

Overwhelming support across the Houses for the valuable work our Armed Forces do in maintaining our security is important and free of political influence.

It has never been more significant for both Houses to understand the issues and challenges that our Forces face now and in the future. The AFPS continues to give Noble Lords, Right Honourable, and Honourable Members the opportunity to witness first hand the arduous conditions and activities that our Armed Forces experience. The scheme provides a superb opportunity to gain a greater understanding and use this knowledge to continue to hold the Government to account.

I know that many have already found the scheme extremely informative and thoroughly recommend it to others.

“The scheme provides a superb opportunity to gain a greater understanding and use this knowledge to continue to hold the Government to account.”



Introduction by Sir Neil Thorne OBE TD DL – Founder and Chairman

When I entered the House there were very few members of parliament with previous military experience and there are even fewer today, which had a serious affect upon the quality of our debates. In this situation, I felt that even a very limited experience of service life must be of help to members in providing them with some foundation for informed comment.

By experiencing life from the lowest rank upwards would have given the graduates benefit, but clearly members of parliament do not have time to do this, so I have invited them to spend 22 days in a year looking at service life from the perspective of a Lt Commander, a Major or a Squadron Leader. This is usually the highest rank which deals with the private sailor, soldier and airman on a day to day basis.

It soon became necessary for participants to be issued with a uniform not only for use as a working overall, but also to enable them to benefit from the experience of becoming embedded within a unit and being treated as one of the family. Our own badges of rank soon followed to help our hosts at all levels identify their guests and to put them into a proper junior context.

In 1997, the then Secretary of State asked me to expand the scheme and to maintain MPs' interest in and knowledge of the services over a

longer period. A Post-Graduate scheme for 20 days was therefore introduced in 2000 to

demonstrate a little of the life of a Commander, Lt Colonel or Wing Commander. Another step was taken soon after by the introduction of a third level for another 20 days at the level of a Naval Captain, Colonel, or Group Captain to learn about jointery and how the services now co-operate closely with one another. The fourth and final experience at Commodore, Brigadier and Air Commodore level is based on the course at the Royal College of Defence Studies.

Mr Speaker continues as our President, and I am also grateful to members on all sides of both Houses for their advice and help.

My thanks too to General Sir David Richards, the Chief of the Defence Staff, who takes a very close interest in our work, to the Service Chiefs, the First Sea Lord, the Chief

of the General Staff, the Chief of Air Staff and the Vice Chief of Defence Staff, the Permanent Secretary, Mrs Ursula Brennan, and to all of their own staff who have been involved. The sponsor companies BAE SYSTEMS, Rolls Royce, AgustaWestland and Capgemini continue with their generous support.

In times when we are asking our young sailors, soldiers and airmen to undertake hazardous duties on our behalf it is vital that members of parliament should ensure that they are fully aware of how the service system operates.

“It is vital that members of parliament should ensure that they are fully aware of how the service system operates.”



General Sir David Richards GCB CBE DSO ADC – Chief of the Defence Staff

It is a pleasure to give my very strong support to the Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme which, for over twenty years, has successfully engaged members from the House of Commons, the House of Lords and the European Parliament with the activities of the Armed Forces. At a time when the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force are engaged across the globe, we particularly value the opportunity this scheme presents for parliamentarians to get a closer look at what we do.

It is through visits over the year, including to Afghanistan, the Falkland Islands and the Caribbean, to ships, airbases and army establishments - both in the UK and abroad - that members of the scheme will see the drive and determination of our forces. Members' operational visits, in particular, give an opportunity to see at first hand how it is, the quality of our people which underpins our overall ability to sustain operational success over time, and the training and equipment required to support them in this essential task to support the national interest in an uncertain world. This year, as the decisions made in the Strategic Defence and Security Review begin to take effect, the insights provided through the scheme will help to inform debate and provide a wider understanding of the post-review force, which must be capable of reacting to a number of diverse threats.

I cannot emphasise enough the benefit of engaging with personnel from all three services, whose daily activities play such an important role in government business. The Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme facilitates that engagement in an environment that allows a frank exchange of views and open discussion. This ability to connect with all ranks is the great benefit of the scheme, and it has an enviable record of success. Its goal continues to be to enable parliamentarians to be

appropriately informed and alive to the issues affecting capabilities of the Armed Forces.

I encourage you to grasp this opportunity and return the enclosed application form.

*“I commend this scheme
to every peer and
Member of Parliament,
and especially to those
who are not yet
participants.”*



Hansard – debate references to AFPS – 2009 to 2011

Baroness Warwick of Undercliffe: “I cannot commend the scheme too highly. It is run by the redoubtable Sir Neil Thorne, and it is a no-holds-barred opportunity to get under the skin of one of the services, as well as to gain an understanding of the generic issues that affect the Ministry of Defence and the services as a whole.”



Chris Bryant MP: “The Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme is an important element of the way parliamentarians obtain information from those who have served or are reservists and from others from other backgrounds, and ensure that that informs our debate.”



Lord Sterling of Plaistow: “I think that Sir Neil Thorne’s splendid Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme over some 20 years has led to a greatly enhanced understanding of the role of our Armed Forces in both Houses of Parliament.”



Lord Rotherwick: “I am fortunate to be part of the Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme. The scheme, conceived by its chairman, Neil Thorne, aims to give parliamentarians a better understanding of our Armed Forces. This course was an example of the brilliance and thoroughness of our Armed Forces training, which is much sought after by other friendly nations’ armed forces.”

David Hamilton MP: “An MP is the only person who may have to put their hand up in this Chamber and decide to send young men and women to a conflict from which they might not return. That is a sobering thought for any politician, and it grounds them in what they are doing.

“On that point, I must tell new Members that they can join the Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme, which comprises the Navy, the Air Force, the Army and the Marines. I honestly think that any new Member should consider doing so. The scheme is absolutely brilliant for seeing and understanding exactly what life is like on the front line. When people get involved with the armed forces, they begin to understand the scale of their work.”



The Royal Navy



Linda Gilroy MP – graduate

My attachment to the Royal Navy was of great benefit to my work locally as a constituency MP and for Parliamentary duties.

Plymouth is home to the largest naval base in Western Europe, together with half the Fleet. My constituency is also the headquarters of 3 Commando Brigade Royal Marines and 29 Commando Regiment Royal Artillery. So there was a really important local link – in fact I was able to meet a good number of my constituents in Afghanistan of all places! That visit also made me acutely aware of the vital – yet often unsung – role of reservists, particularly medics, many of whom also come from my constituency, but have left their jobs and their families to serve alongside their full time counterparts.

Through my membership of the House of Commons Defence Select Committee I am quite used to meeting with admirals, generals and air marshals, together with MoD Ministers and



officials. The Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme gave me a completely different perspective. The scheme enabled me to speak to a range of people at all levels, from the newest recruit to the most experienced NCOs, from the chaplain to the chef. No prior knowledge was assumed, so I was briefed not as a policy expert, but from the basics upwards. This allowed me to consider the bigger picture and see how the different elements slot together – which can be all too easy to forget when embroiled in the detail of policy. To do this in an organized way rather than through casual contact within the limits of the constituency also gave added value to my defence interest.



As well as giving me a more rounded picture of how things are on the ground, the scheme also provided many valuable opportunities for me to hear and discuss directly what makes for a good experience of service life and what needs to be worked on.

“The scheme also provided many valuable opportunities for me to hear and discuss directly what makes for a good experience of service life ...”

Following my visit to Operation Herrick I was able to discuss with Ministers – in confidence – a number of comments and suggestions regarding equipment. I am always keen to ensure family and welfare issues find a place on our Defence Select committee Agenda and there were quite a lot of opportunities to meet families, as well as serving personnel, at high days and feast days like the passing out parade at Lymington as well as in quieter corners.

I particularly enjoyed attending the Advanced Staff Courses at the Defence Academy Shrivenham which provided the opportunity to engage in discussion and debate with some of the people on their way to the top of the services. I found their contributions interesting and stimulating – and I hope they may have found the view of an outsider and a politician to be of benefit.

Ultimately, the scheme taught me that our servicemen and women are highly motivated by, and proud of, what they are doing on our behalf, often in the most challenging circumstances. They need, deserve and appreciate our best endeavours to understand, respect and support their work and the unique nature of service life.



James Rhys House of Commons clerk – graduate

As a member of the House of Commons staff, I was grateful to be included in the intake for 2009, and was determined to make the most of my attachment to the Royal Marines. I had had limited experience of the armed forces before and was keen to take this opportunity to meet service men and women at all levels and find out more about their experiences, their motivation, and their expectations.

My attachment began with a visit to the Royal Marines Commando Training Centre at Lympstone, near Dartmoor. We spent three days observing the progress of Royal Marine recruits through their 32 week training, culminating in a terrifying sequence of speed marches, a 30 mile march across Dartmoor, the “Tarzan assault” course and the endurance course. We were able to speak to recruits at all stages in the process about their experiences, their motivations for joining



the Royal Marines and their career expectations. We also spoke to the officers and NCOs who were taking them through the training, imbuing recruits with the discipline that the service relies upon and maintaining the Royal Marines’ demanding standards but also investing a great deal of time in encouraging and mentoring.

I next spent a week with 45 Commando, and other units of 3 Commando Brigade, observing cold weather warfare training in northern Norway. Sleeping under canvas in the Arctic Circle in February, and following amphibious assault training in an icy fjord proved memorable experiences and the week provided a fascinating insight into the value of this extreme weather training for the Armed Forces’ cold weather experts.

My attachment also included a visit to Otterburn range in Northumberland for 45 Commando’s pre-deployment training, before they went out to Afghanistan and a visit to Plymouth to observe amphibious exercises involving the Royal Marines including a boarding exercise at sea. This illustrated further dimensions of the intense training that marines receive.

“I was made to feel extremely welcome at each stage of the attachment.”

I completed my attachment with a visit to Camp Bastion. This was a great opportunity to meet service personnel from all three services in theatre. We also met Afghan National Army servicemen at Camp Shorabak, the home of the ANA. We were briefed by British officers on their progress in training and mentoring the ANA recruits and on their experiences serving with them in combat. I also had the chance to speak to some of the trainees as they received induction in the detection of IEDs.

The experience overall gave me a fascinating, moving, and humbling insight into life in the armed forces. I completed my attachment hugely impressed with the professionalism, dedication and good humour of the service men and women that I met. I was made to feel extremely welcome at each stage of the attachment, and also experienced widespread support for the scheme and its objectives. I would certainly recommend involvement in the scheme to anyone interested in learning more about the armed forces.



Lord Haworth – graduate

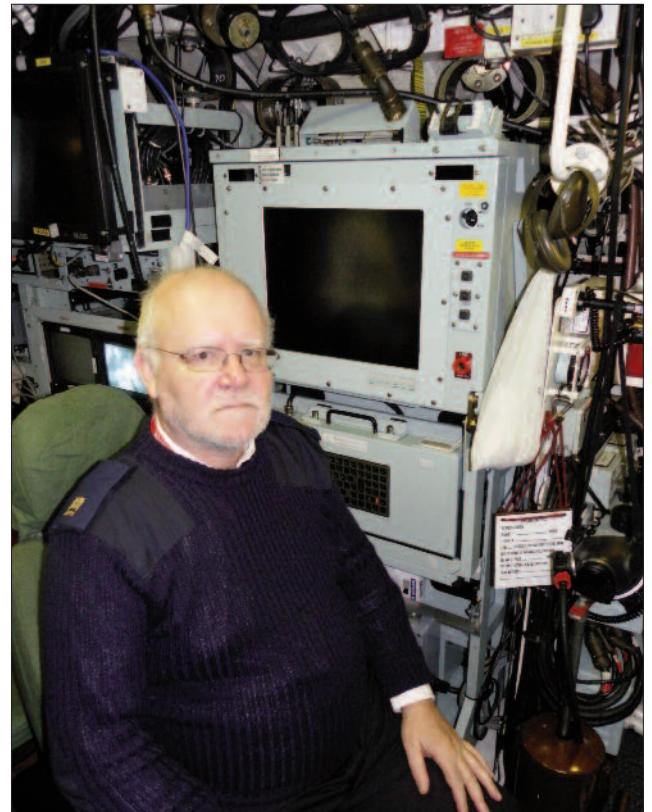
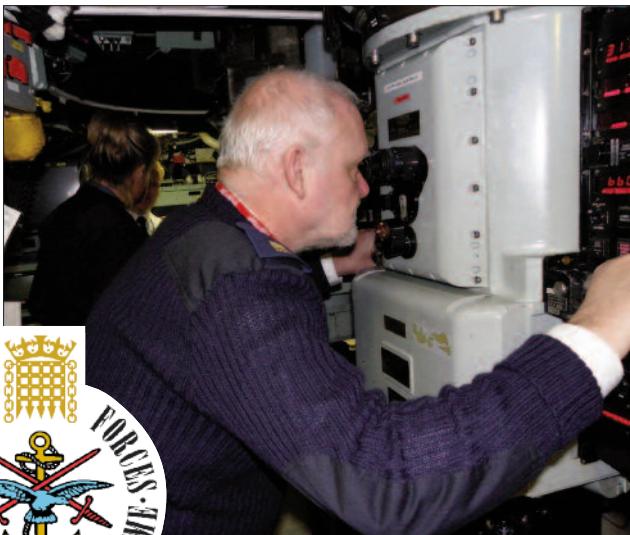
The sweat trickled down the back of my neck from under an ill-fitting helmet as the ship's Lynx helicopter swooped down towards the tiny landing area on the stern of HMS Manchester, on deployment in the Caribbean and I still remember thinking "I hope these guys have practised this before..." It was with quite a feeling of relief as we clambered out and headed for the relative cool of the ship's hangar but I should have known – I certainly do now – that practicing things like this is what the two helicopter pilots do every day, sometimes several times a day, and in all conditions. I mention this first because that arrival on to the deck of the Type 42 Destroyer remains my most vivid memory of my time with the Royal Navy – and it is a reminder of the intensive training, practicing and more practicing which takes place on a continual basis to maintain a state of readiness. My most abiding impression, after my year with the scheme, is of the sheer professionalism of the armed forces, as preparations are made for deployment and possible combat.

“Outside of military families there are fewer and fewer citizens who know what the Army, Air Force and Navy really does.”

I had joined the Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme – and opted for the Navy – because, at the age of 60+ and after a few years as a Member of the House of Lords I had come to realize that, in common with many Parliamentarians I had no real idea of what life was like in uniform. Parliament has an important role in scrutinizing the Executive – and this includes the Ministry of Defence no less than any other Department of State; and yet there has probably never been

a time when fewer MPs and Peers have had direct experience of the military. In this we are no different from the general public. Outside of military families there are fewer and fewer citizens who know what the Army, Air Force and Navy really does; except through the eyes of the media. And the media often has its own agenda: to sell newspapers by grabbing headlines and concentrating on the sentimental, the exceptional or the sensational.

Over the course of the year in 2010, I was privileged to be able to visit the naval dockyards at Devonport, Portsmouth and Faslane – and to go aboard HMS Gloucester, HMS St Albans, and HMS Daring as well as the submarines HMS Vanguard and HMS Turbulent. Having witnessed a simulated attack whilst on HMS Manchester, I was also able to be present for a “Thursday War” on HMS Albion – at sea in Falmouth Bay. Added to this was a visit to RNAS Yeovilton to learn about the Fleet Air Arm and to meet the men and women who maintain the helicopter squadrons; a visit which coincided with the withdrawal of the Harriers and the Ark Royal. The Parliamentarians making that visit – there were of course a number – were left in no doubt as to the true feelings of the Harrier pilots and many felt that this aspect of the SDSR had been very ill-considered. More recent events in the Middle East have caused even more questions to be asked about the wisdom of the early withdrawal of the carrier and its unique capabilities. All of these issues would have more likely passed me by had I not volunteered for my year's attachment. They are much more real to me now and I would guess to all the others who have participated in the scheme. Long may it continue.



Baroness Fookes of Plymouth DBE DL – *advanced post-graduate*

I am fast becoming an addict of the Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme but unlike most addictions this one is wholly beneficial. My third course, unlike the first two, included the Royal Marines as well as the Royal Navy. In fact the Royal Marines' heavy duties in Afghanistan meant I saw less of them than I would have wished though I did spend a fascinating afternoon at the Royal Marine School of Music in Portsmouth and a more sobering encounter with young men injured and attending the Royal Marine Recovery Cell at HMS Drake.

The difficulties of the course at the Royal Marine Training Centre at Lympstone never cease to amaze me but I was particularly struck by the way they are using instructors with recent battle experience. Their traditional insistence on the highest standards is now coupled with a more sensitive approach to the problems faced by young recruits. Mercifully I was spared attempting the assault course but I did manage

nationalities operating in the Gulf and the varying interests involved. Then we boarded HMS Kent to see her at work followed by transfer at sea to the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, Cardigan Bay. The comfort of this huge ship made it a temptation to stay on board but the more intrepid amongst us made a transfer to a tiny minesweeper. The highlight there was seeing the exercise of finding and blowing up dummy mines in parallel with the Americans. It became clear that the British were going to outshine the Americans. However when we came to be transferred back to land courtesy of a Desert Hawk helicopter it did not seem the time to tell the young American officer in charge of us about the minesweeping competition!

At the conclusion of the course I was fortunate enough to be presented with my certificate from no less a seadog than HRH the Duke of Edinburgh himself – what a way to end a brilliant time with the AFPS!



to shut down the simulators at the indoor range when I tried a little target practice!

I enjoyed two trips overseas. In August twelve of us set out to visit an exercise taking place in the Falklands. Events took an unexpected turn when we were actually stranded on Ascension Island for around three days. Heavy snows had closed the base on the Falklands but fortunately the Air Commodore in charge of military activity in the Falklands was travelling on the same plane so we received an excellent briefing while on Ascension. Alas our Falklands visit was reduced to 24 hours but even in that time we managed to visit the base there, saw a Rapier Battery and the takeoff of a Tornado flown by one of the most experienced pilots, a woman, (to my great pleasure).

Shortly afterwards I was off again this time to the Gulf with a dizzying succession of activities there. We had scarcely landed in Bahrain when we were given one of the most complex briefings I have ever received on the wide variety of

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Roger Gale MP – further advanced post-graduate

We left Brize Norton at midnight on the Sunday, destined for the Falkland Islands via Ascension Island. We finally arrived at Mount Pleasant on the Friday morning at 02.00. The delay was caused by the worst winter snowfall that the Falklands have experienced in twenty years – a blizzard that effectively closed the islands down and brought all traffic and most military activity to a standstill. On a par with arctic warfare training in Norway. We had the cold-weather kit but we simply could not get there.

So we watched as our aircraft returned to the United Kingdom, having deposited an unexpected bounty of fresh fruit and vegetables on the volcanic protrusion from the Atlantic that is Ascension, and we settled down to wait for the weather.

We were in good company as we were travelling with the Commander, British Forces South, and with time on our hands we were swiftly exposed to a series of illuminating first-hand briefings about our operations and facilities in the Falklands and Antarctica, followed by an in-depth



examination of the strategic importance, to the UK and to the United States, of the Ascension Islands.

Arriving, finally, at Mount Pleasant following the clearance of two feet of snow from the runway we spent our first and only night in the Falklands on board the South Atlantic patrol ship, HMS Gloucester, and we would all like to thank the officers and crew for making space for us, making us so welcome and allowing us to milk every minute of our stay for all it was worth.

We had, then, just time to visit the rapier missile battery on top of Poon Hill and to meet the men and women who man it and to watch as one of our female fast-jet pilots

took off on a sortie in a Tornado to complete a record-breaking two thousand hours of jet flying time. Then back on to our plane and, with a middle of the night refuelling stop on Ascension, then to Brize Norton.

“The ‘military covenant’ matters a very great deal.”

There have been many high spots on the path to advanced post graduation. A spin in the “dunker” at RNAS Yeovilton, HMS Alacrity while acting as the West Indies Guard ship and on jungle warfare training in Belize, to HMS Fearless before she was decommissioned, to the aircraft carrier HMS Illustrious, to see armoured vehicles in Germany – I still

do not understand why our forces in Afghanistan were not offered the protection of the “Dingo” – the intellectually challenging rigours of the Royal College of Defence studies, to HMS Bulwark in the Gulf of Oman towards the end of her gruelling seven-month deployment, and an early visit to HMS Daring the brand new 45 type air defence destroyer.

On the top of Poon Hill, in the Falklands in mid-winter overlooking the Mount Pleasant base, there stands a roughly hewn signpost erected by some homesick servicemen. It points towards Wembley, and to Herne Bay in my constituency.

A compelling reminder, for me, that the task of defending our security and our interests in the far-flung and sometimes bleak corners of the world is carried out by real men and women whose homes and families are not too far away from where we live. The “military covenant” matters a very great deal.



The Army



Mike Penning MP – graduate

It is now some 37 years since I joined the Grenadier Guards as a boy soldier and some 30 years since I finished my service with the RAMC. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time in the AFPS even though it is sometimes difficult to steal the time from my Parliamentary and constituency duties. Since becoming an MP in 2005 I have tried at all times to support our armed forces but I was aware that my knowledge of up to date service issues was becoming dated. The scheme has allowed me to renew and update my knowledge.

Of course I noticed many differences between today's Army and the one I served in over thirty years ago. Back in my time, as a Guardsman, units were very self-contained with their own logistics, transport and medics. Now, I see how fighting forces from across all the services are more integrated and share resources. In Afghanistan I saw sailors who had left their ships to travel straight away to fighting roles in the front line. I saw with my own eyes how reliant our front line services are on the Territorial Army. A marked difference from thirty years ago that particularly struck me was the number of women who now serve in front line operations. Many of them do serve in logistical

“To have participated in the Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme is a rare privilege.”

roles but the scheme allowed me to see them there and to any detractors of the value of their contribution I can tell them that I have personally seen the trucks they drive riddled with bullet holes.

Some things, however, never change. During my training on the firing ranges I used the same model GPMG, crouched on the same firing range and peppered the same Butt as I did as a Guardsman in 1976. Army cooks still serve up a top breakfast and the average Squaddie is still the same as ever. I learned in Afghanistan how precious to the Squaddie light bulbs are. They are so scarce they currently serve as a currency for exchanging other goods and luxuries. Whenever I could, I talked with our serving men and women and I listened to them. The thing about Squaddies is they rarely complain to officers about their lot. They take what is thrown at them and just get on with their job. They don't write protest letters about the lack of equipment, they just get on with it. For this and many other

reasons I feel that politicians have a moral obligation to protect them and to nurture their well being as part of the military covenant.

One of the most moving memories for me was when as a Major I walked out onto the helipad at Camp Bastion to be greeted by an Army Air Corps Major who I immediately recognised as the son of my very good friend, the former MP for Southend, Sir Teddy Taylor.

To have participated in the Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme is a rare privilege for which I am most grateful.



Dai Havard MP – advanced post-graduate

The AFPS offers an insight to MPs that they cannot get in any other way; as well as giving opportunities for up to date experiences. Strategic policy and decisions about how and whether to deploy forces on dangerous operations; how they are equipped; through to the continued duty of care to individuals who serve and have served; all are issues MP's will either have to make or certainly influence. Better understanding must help if quality decisions are to be taken in Parliament.

Many would argue that defence and security of the country are the first duties of government. Elected in June 2001; with the so-called Cold War seen

“Many would argue that defence and security of the country are the first duties of government.”

unit on Salisbury Plain as part of the opposing force for the Royal Marines. A week with 2RTR at BATUS in Canada on live firing exercises with the armoured brigades and infantry who would also enter Iraq in early 2003 followed. Stimulating debates about whether the UK would enter Iraq in derelict barns, scrapes and dugouts on the prairie land of Canada and of Southern England's plains informed me as much if not more than any debate in Westminster.

Since that time I have had many more opportunities; from riding with the Blues & Royals to visits on operations in Afghanistan and training with Ghurkhas in the jungle in Brunei. Progressing through the levels of the scheme I have had the best possible briefings and have seen many of the senior commanders develop through their careers meeting them at various stages along the way.

In addition to the AFPS I have had the privilege to serve on the House of Commons Defence Select Committee (HCDC) joining it in the autumn of 2003. Some might think the AFPS would therefore be of less interest as I have gained experience of the armed services another way. The AFPS supplements my work with the HCDC. I gain from the AFPS what in the Army is referred to as a 'granularity:' the chance to see and hear the 'ground truth.' Something I try to feed into observations and insights made to Parliament. This reflects the knowledge and voices of those who are directly involved in order to help balance the debate. I hope soon to do the next stage which is at the Royal College of Defence Studies that gives the truly international perspective.



to be over and the conflicts in the Balkans ending, I had no expectation that expeditionary warfare, terrorism and security would feature so heavily in parliament for the next decade. The seismic changes in domestic and international politics triggered in September 2001 soon consolidated what I had known; namely that not only did the MoD have a significant economic and social foot print in my community but that hard decisions about defence also meant I needed to gain some more direct experience.

I joined the Army section of the AFPS in the summer of 2002. Following a period at an Initial Training Centre came the opportunity to join an exercise with the RRW – Welsh TA



Godfrey Bloom MEP – advanced post-graduate

I started the scheme with the Royal Navy in an enjoyable and informative year followed by an equally fascinating attachment to the Royal Air Force which in 2008 brought me an introduction to ‘jointery.’ In the old cold war days we never had much to do with the other services, certainly not at my lowly rank. But the modern armed services work together in theatre all the time and at every rank. Working together means training together, training together means understanding the different underlying service cultures. One thing struck me forcefully was the ‘can do’ approach of the modern armed forces, particularly the Royal Air Force. Watch out, those of you who do the scheme, mention you want to do something in an air force mess, and the chances are you will be doing it the next day.

This year experience took me to the British Army training week outside Medicine Hat in Alberta, Canada. Previous excursions have included Afghanistan, the Middle East and the North Atlantic! Although we are fighting ‘small wars’ at the moment the army also has to be ready to fight a conventional one. Tanks, artillery, infantry and logistics. If it is going to work on the day, training is everything. I was made very welcome by the King’s Royal Hussars out on the prairie and managed to meet up with the Yorkshire Regiment who gave me the best military cup of tea I have had in the field for over 30 years.

Twenty minutes in the back of an armoured personnel carrier over rough terrain was enough for me. How do they do it in theatre for so long, for up to six hours or more? Never mind the ever present threat of attack. I just followed in after an infantry assault.

“Previous excursions have included Afghanistan, the Middle East and the North Atlantic!”

We sometimes forget that soldiers can return from six months in theatre and then have to pick up on their conventional training. A trip to Canada, although popular in itself, is a tough call for married men if it means more time away from the family.

This scheme is not a photo-call opportunity much beloved of senior politicians, you can be on the training areas or in theatre for days at a time. It is not a soft option although your hosts go out of their way to make you comfortable.

Morale is extraordinarily high but you only see the working side. You will not be with them when they stand down and have time to reflect, or meet many of their families.

Junior ranks will politely whinge but senior NCOs and Officers are more circumspect. You will learn as much in the mess as in the field.



Lord Rogan – advanced post-graduate

Interest in our armed forces is at an all time high – driven primarily by the high cost of our forces’ sacrifice in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the ensuing debate about the nature and quality of the military covenant.

Poignant images from Wootton Bassett are not the only issue driving debate however. The stresses and strains on the public finances have put the Ministry of Defence in the spotlight, be that questions about the procurement practice or ongoing questions about the outworking of the Strategic Defence Review.

As any Parliamentarian or military planner will tell you, however, the only certainty which should be accounted for is that of ‘uncertainty’ itself. “Events, dear boy, events” was how Macmillan put it, but perhaps such wisdom was formed before his political career, serving as a distinguished Captain in the Grenadier Guards during the Great War.



Macmillan was, of course, one of many former Service people who made the transition to politics. Throughout the 20th Century it was commonplace to find former members of the armed forces sitting in both Houses of Parliament. That brought many benefits, not least a full and frank understanding of what military life entailed. In these relatively peaceful days, however, the absence of mass mobilization and National Service has dramatically thinned the numbers of Parliamentarians who can claim direct military experience.

Given that lack of practical experience, programmes such as the AFPS are invaluable. Although my own previous understanding of the military may have been regarded as ‘above average,’ I must admit that I jumped at the opportunity to spend 22 days on the ground.

The disparate demands and expectations we place upon the armed forces – within an increasingly finite budget – are frankly extraordinary, and we are fortunate that the exceptional professionalism and bravery of our service men and women are up to the task.

“I have found those ‘hands-on’ experiences provided by the AFPS to be invaluable ...”

During my time with the AFPS I witnessed first hand the variety of the theatres in which we deploy our troops, from Oman to Pristina, Salisbury Plain to Faslane.

In Pristina I joined a Commando unit in a policing role touring the city’s rubble strewn streets – deployed as part of a KFOR force fulfilling the UK’s obligations to the United Nations. From there I travelled to Oman for Exercise SAIF SAREEA, also with Commandos, swapping our urban surroundings for a desert-based exercise with a completely different set of expectations and demands.

For good measure AFPS added in a visit to the submarine base at Faslane and a close-up view of what exactly training on Salisbury Plain entails.

As recent events in the Middle East have demonstrated once again, long-term predictions of defence requirements are virtually impossible. I am by no means an ‘expert’ now, but I have found those ‘hands-on’ experiences provided by the AFPS to be invaluable as I try, with my Parliamentary hat on, to assess the efficacy of an ever changing Defence Strategy. The AFPS is an excellent starting point for anyone seeking to understand the issues at hand and I thoroughly recommend it.



Philip Hollobone MP – advanced post-graduate

As someone who has always been enthusiastic about Her Majesty's Armed Forces, during my time with the AFPS I have been surprised how little I actually knew about the modern RAF, Royal Navy and Army. Thankfully my time on the scheme has put that right and the programme put together by the respective services has ensured a logical and understandable progression from observing raw recruits in their training units to chatting with experienced service personnel on the frontline in Afghanistan.

20 plus days a year on the scheme is a big commitment, but by participating in the scheme I am confident that I now have a good understanding of the important issues facing our armed services. As a result I can speak about these issues without getting bamboozled by the jungle of jargon that plagues anything military and can effectively hold Defence Ministers to account on the floor of the House of Commons.

I have been fortunate enough to have enjoyed placements on the scheme with all three branches of the armed forces and have been able to visit rear echelon units as well as front line commands. With the RAF, I visited several RAF main operating bases including RAF Marham in Norfolk (Tornadoes), RAF Coningsby in Lincolnshire (Typhoons) and RAF Cottesmore in Rutland (Harriers), as well as the bases which train helicopter crews (RAF Shawbury in Shropshire) and jet pilots and air-sea rescue (RAF Valley in Anglesey). The highlight was a rollercoaster flight in a Hawk trainer from RAF Leeming in Yorkshire. The G forces are incredible and the acrobatics awesome. Flying upside down at speed at 12,000 feet and then being asked to take the controls and flip the plane over the right way up and then to do loop the loops is something I would never have had the chance to do unless I had joined the scheme.

With the Army I was able to witness a Land Combat Power Demonstration and travel in the turret of a Challenger tank at high speed across Salisbury Plain.

With the Royal Navy I experienced a helicopter flight onto the deck of HMS Illustrious and spent 24 hours on board during which I was able to witness refuelling at sea during a NATO exercise. I was also

able to visit the submarine base at Faslane and the Commander Helicopter Force at RNAS Yeovilton.

*“I am confident
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With all three services I have been able to visit the training establishments for officers and other ranks: Royal Navy – HMS Raleigh and the Britannia Royal Naval College; Army – Pirbright and Sandhurst; RAF – RAF Halton and RAF Cranwell. I have also been able to meet all the Service Chiefs and discuss the challenges faced by each Branch.

The AFPS attachments also involved overseas visits to Operation Herrick in Afghanistan as well as to Cyprus, Ascension Island and the Falkland Islands. The four day visits to Afghanistan added greatly to my understanding of the situation facing our troops in theatre and also provided an opportunity to thank at first hand British service personnel for their efforts on our behalf. Reassuringly, during the visit, individual servicemen and women were encouraged by their commanders to tell us exactly what they as individuals wished to tell us and not what the ‘top brass’ might want said. They were told that this is democracy in action and that this was their opportunity to make any points they wanted. This is another huge benefit of the scheme – it is a two way process: MPs get to find out a lot more about the armed forces, whilst serving members of the armed forces get to find out a lot more about MPs and Parliament.

Completing the Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme is a big commitment in time, but I believe firmly that my constituents would wish me to be involved with Her Majesty's Armed Forces in this way, especially at a time when public support for our servicemen and women is demonstrably important.



James Gray MP – further advanced post-graduate

When, as a new MP in 1997 I joined the Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme, I little imagined that some twelve years later I would be completing the fourth level of it. Call me an army-barmy anorak if you will, but I have to say that I have both found it extremely interesting, and have enjoyed every minute of it. A week in South Armagh before the end of the troubles, training with the army in both Canada and Kenya, seeing the inside of the Swindon recruiting office, briefings with generals galore, visits to pretty much every army base and office – all of it has been stimulating, educational and enjoyable in equal measure.

“Gone are the days when most MPs could claim some kind of military experience.”

its methods and its ethos shown at Defence Questions and in debates. My only substantive rank in the HAC was as a third grade gunner. But I have greatly enjoyed rising through the ranks of Colonel Sir Neil Thorne's Private Army, starting in 1997 as a Major, then in 2000 to Lt Colonel, and in 2003 when I was also a Shadow Defence Minister attending the Royal College of Defence Studies as a Colonel. Having now completed enough days on my fourth and last course as a Brigadier, I have every confidence that they may well have to reinvent the fine old rank of Field Marshal for me. Or perhaps I should just remain as a slightly better-informed Gunner Gray?



Having rehone my basic military skills, originally learned many years ago as a TA soldier in the Honourable Artillery Company, the high point and culmination of all of these efforts was my many visits to our soldiers actually deployed on operations – in Northern Ireland, Iraq and on several occasions in Afghanistan. What a privilege it was this January to see the sheer cool professionalism, grit and determination of our soldiers in Helmand Province. They know what they have to do, and they know how to do it, although they could do with quite a few other assets – especially helicopters – to do it with! Kandahar, Camp Bastion and Lash Kar Gah alike we watched the finest soldiers in the world effortlessly preparing for and carrying out some of the most dangerous and intense warfare since 1945.

Gone are the days when most MPs could claim some kind of military experience. The Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme has done superb work over many years in trying to bridge that gap in our collective knowledge. Its success is obvious from the much higher level of understanding of the military,



Hansard – debate references to AFPS – 2009 to 2011

Richard Younger-Ross MP: “I visited Iraq in 2003 with the Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme, which is excellent and I recommend it to any Hon Member who has not been on it.”

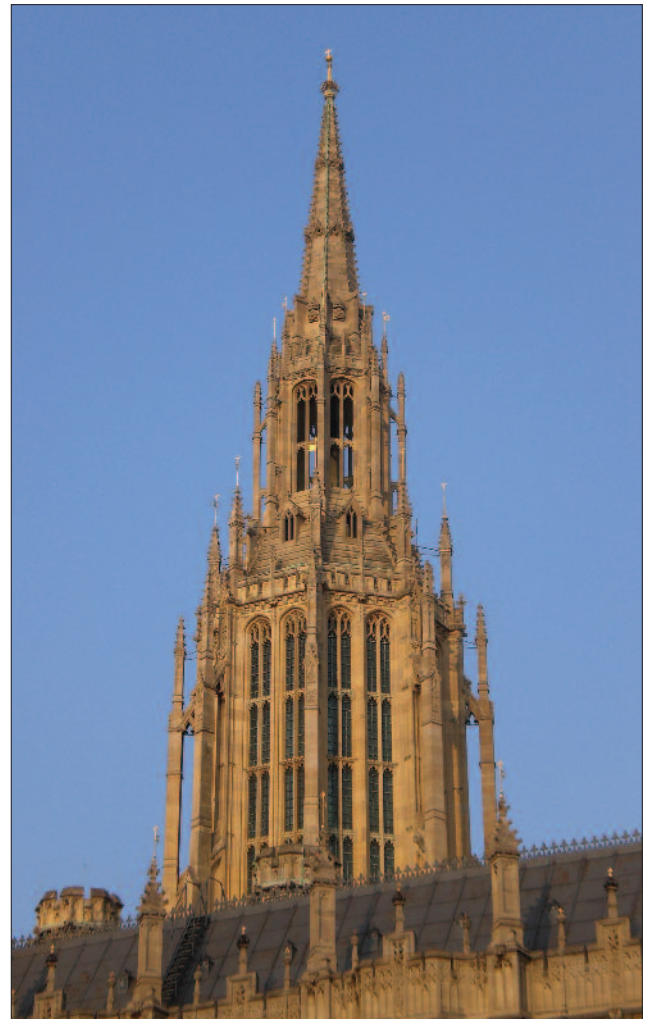


Sally Keeble MP: “Having spent a year with the Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme, including a trip to Afghanistan, I was massively impressed by our young people in the armed forces here, and that was exceeded only by seeing them in action in Afghanistan, where the work that they are doing is in our national interest.”

Madeleine Moon MP: “I have also joined the Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme so that I can flesh out my hinterland of understanding of the recruitment, selection, training, skills, equipment and pressures on our military. I am spending a year with the RAF and have been deeply impressed by the dedication, focus and skills of everyone I have met.”



Linda Gilroy MP: “I was fortunate enough to go on an Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme visit to Afghanistan just before this operation, and it was a rare chance to try to find answers to some of the questions that I and my constituents have asked about what the men and women from Plymouth who are deployed out there are doing on our behalf, how they feel about it, and how their kit and equipment are serving them and standing up to the harsh treatment that it gets in the high-tempo operations and different terrain and climate.”



The Royal Air Force



Juan Watterson MHK – graduate

The Isle of Man has long had strong connections with the British armed forces. From Lt. Quilliam on the bridge of the Victory at Trafalgar, to World War 2, where we had a higher volunteer rate than most English counties, to the modern day. Where the British armed forces have been, they have found Manxmen in their midst. It was therefore with a great sense of pride that I am the first Member of Tynwald, the World's oldest continuous Parliament, to join the Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme (AFPS) and at 29, I am possibly the youngest.

The AFPS provides a fascinating insight to real life in the Royal Air Force. As a civilian, you wonder if anything will prepare you for the front line in Afghanistan, yet those I met due for deployment as well as those who have already been in theatre have felt well prepared for the challenges they have faced. It is a testament that a service that can be called upon from the Arctic to Afghanistan is still ready for anything.

“... the AFPS gives you access to sights that civilian life will never offer ...”

On a personal level, the AFPS gives you access to sights that civilian life will never offer; flying low through the Welsh valleys, experiencing a simulated engine failure in a twin engine Dominie, a mess dinner at Cranwell and privileged access to all of the kit on show at the Royal International Air Tattoo.

However good the technology though, the RAF's best asset is its people. The resilience of this fantastic organisation is marked by the fact that despite snow drifts and frozen water supplies Harrier patrols were still flying over the Falkland Islands. The constant snowfall ensuring a three day stop at Ascension Island, whose thirty degree heat we certainly hadn't

packed for! My time at Shrivenham also provided theoretical underpinning of the British philosophy of air power. The international attendance at the Advanced Command and Staff Course shows that the British armed forces remain a cutting edge school of thought as well as having the ability to project power from the air and the space to influence the behaviour of people and the course of events.

The AFPS showed me what a valuable, well managed organisation we have defending our shared national interests. It gives service personnel exceptional training and it manages their transition into and out of a community like no other. The breadth of their work is staggering, and it has to be seen to be believed.

As a result of the AFPS, I feel better equipped to discuss the forces with constituents and their families, whether it be on Afghanistan policy, the merits of cadets, or family support.

Politics is a continual education. Seeing the armed forces in 22 days can never do it justice, but it provides a behind the scenes look into a world that many only see through the eyes of the media. As decision makers we should make the time to experience the world inhabited by our servicemen and women so that we can make informed decisions about their lives and welfare.



Madeleine Moon MP – graduate

As a new member of the Defence Select Committee I wanted to develop my hinterland of understanding so joining the Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme was an obvious move. I joined with Lord (Charles) Shrewsbury, Juan Watterson from the House of Keys on the Isle of Man and Claire Taylor, Senior Defence Analyst from the Commons Library.

My lasting impression has been of how professional the RAF is and how focussed all of the personnel I met have been. Training and ongoing skills development were a constant theme everywhere we visited as everyone sought to reach their maximum potential.



I will always remember my first three days on the scheme. The night we arrived at Shrivenham the country ground to a halt, with even London at a stand still, because of snow. Boy was it cold. The course was excellent and full of deeply informative briefings on a range of issues including defence policy, defence commitments, operational experiences at unit level, and the effect of combat on individuals, command and leadership. These were lectures given by leading experts within the military and questions were no holds barred.

This set the tone for the rest of our visits. At every station I was impressed by the dedication and focus of the young people during training. We were given the opportunity to meet and talk to personnel about their experience of the training, an opportunity which should be offered to anyone who is negative towards young people. There was no holding back from the tasks being undertaken, all I saw was total concentration and commitment.

I was also pleased to see the attention given to maximising the opportunity for civilian qualifications, which supports recruitment and gives confidence about future employability. The RAF also funds foundation degrees for 30 people a year in engineering.

“There was no holding back from the tasks being undertaken ...”

The use of simulators as part of training allowing trainees to learn from mistakes at much less cost was a revelation. Fuel costs alone make simulators cost effective even with a £45,000 per week electricity bill to run computers at the Typhoon training facility. In comparison fuel alone for Typhoons was £7,000 for an hour or £70,000 if depreciation and maintenance costs were added. Virtual reality training improved confidence and reduced failure rates.

There are so many wonderful experiences that I will never forget; the Chinook helicopter flight to RAF Valley across the Welsh mountains and the flight to Odiham via manoeuvres over Salisbury Plain. The wonderful Battle of Britain flight at Coningsby, flown, without the aid of simulators, by pilots used to the latest technology. Every mess we have stayed in has been incredibly welcoming with good food and lodgings.



My two final visits were to the Aberkenfig Air Cadet Squadron in Bridgend and to the University of Wales Air Squadron. The chance to meet and talk to people in the RAF has been an experience I intend to repeat by moving on to the next level of the scheme as soon as I can.



Claire Taylor HoC Senior Defence Analyst – graduate

If, like me, you are a bit of an aeroplane junkie, with a little bit of tomboy thrown in, then you'll never be disappointed with the RAF. Being able to clamber 'delicately' all over a Hawk T2, Tornado GR4 and the new Eurofighter Typhoon was enough of a fix in itself but a flight in the cockpit of a Hercules C130J and a two-hour training exercise in a Chinook flying 50ft over Salisbury Plain, skimming the tree tops, and practising tactical take-offs and landings were a fantastic experience and a truly unbelievable demonstration of skill and teamwork on the part of the crew. Crashing a Hercules and 'killing' all of my distinguished colleagues during a simulator exercise was enough to convince me, however, that I was definitely not pilot material!

But life with the RAF is more than fast shiny aeroplanes, and that quickly becomes apparent. Several very informative days were spent with RAF recruits at RAF Halton and RAF Cranwell, with personnel during their phase two training at RAF Shawbury, Cosford, Honington and Valley and then at some of the RAF's main operating bases. The most valuable moments were undoubtedly those spent chatting to the personnel themselves over a cup of coffee or an MoD ration pack while on exercise in a draughty field tent. I soon learnt that boil-in-the-bag treacle sponge pudding was not for the faint hearted; while small bottles of Tabasco sauce and Yorkie bars were a valuable trading commodity among fellow personnel. But I was equally reassured to learn that the horror stories frequently reported in the media of appalling accommodation, ineffective equipment, and inadequate welfare provision, among many other things, were not endemic and that measures to improve the lives of service personnel were very much a priority. The openness and honesty with which recruits and others were also encouraged

“I’m only sorry that my year with the RAF is over.”

to speak about military life was a very welcome and pleasant surprise. This is partly what makes this scheme so valuable. Above all else it is an opportunity to engage with service personnel at all levels, and see first-hand what challenges and opportunities military life presents.

What has to be the highlight of this last year, however, was the operational visit to the Falkland Islands. Hampered by extreme weather conditions, the trip had to be curtailed somewhat – stuck in the equatorial climes of Ascension Island for three days with clothes only suitable for snow and freezing temperatures is certainly something I'll never forget – but that only served to demonstrate some of the challenges facing RAF personnel deployed in some of the more remote parts of the world: challenges it could be quite easy to forget in light of the operational priorities of Afghanistan.



Words will never be able to express fully my admiration for the sheer dedication and professionalism demonstrated by every member of our armed forces that I met during my time with the AFPS; from those who sought to ensure that every visit we made was informative and worthwhile, to those who work so tirelessly in the service of their country. I'm only sorry that my year with the RAF is over. There truly is no substitute for first-hand experience in gaining a better understanding of our superb military.



Earl of Shrewsbury & Waterford DL – post-graduate

I joined the scheme in January, and the first visit was to The Defence Studies College at Shrivenham, for two days. We were taken through a number of lectures each day with excellent PowerPoint presentations covering a wide range of issues.

A visit to Air Command at High Wycombe came next, followed by a day at RAF Halton to be told about the recruiting process in the RAF. We met a number of new recruits who were keen, positive and thoroughly motivated.

RAF Cranwell was next on the agenda; there we met a number of young people, some of whom would be streamed to become fast jet pilots and crew; some, rotary pilots and some, transport pilots. Others would graduate to go on to other parts of the RAF.

RIAT at Fairford was a superb day in June. A very wide array of aircraft and equipment was on display, and flying. During the summer, I visited the RAF Regiment at Honington, RAF Shawbury and RAF Valley.

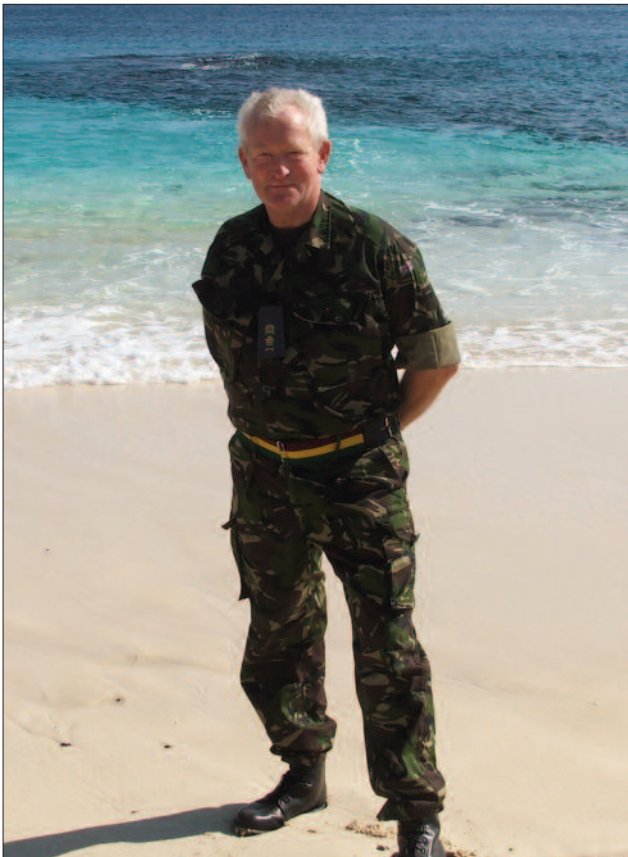
during our enforced stay on Ascension we had the benefit of a lecture from him which included the political situation in South America. We finally reached The Falklands and briefly visited both HMS Gloucester and Mount Pleasant.

“It has
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I requested a visit in December to the former RAF 16 MU Site at Stafford – my home town, and where the Base was compulsorily purchased during WW2 from my family’s former Estate – to meet the Tactical Supply Wing. This special unit provided me with a fascinating insight into their work.

During the past 12 months, I have been fortunate to have been included in welcoming veterans to Parliament to say “Thank You”. The conversations had at those ‘homecomings’ have been most useful – and one learns quickly of the gallantry and commitment that they all give to the defence of our nation, and to the world community.

The dedication, professionalism and guts that our Armed Forces show through all branches of the services is a lesson for all of us, especially we politicians. Throughout, I have been treated with courtesy and I have made many friends. It has been a huge educational experience, and extremely worthwhile. All whom I have met in the military have told me how much they value the AFPS. I hope that there will be an opportunity for me to continue the fascinating journey of knowledge-gaining in our Armed Forces.



A trip to The Falklands came in July, with the weather playing its part. Flying from RAF Brize Norton, we landed halfway at Ascension Island to be informed that Mount Pleasant in the Falklands was closed as they were experiencing appalling weather conditions. C-in-C South Atlantic was with us, and



Frank Cook MP – further advanced post-graduate

It seems like only yesterday that a certain Neil Thorne MP approached me in 1988 to enquire tentatively what I thought about participating on a parliamentary scheme with the armed services “Would you as opposition defence whip seek the support of your front bench for this proposal?” he asked.

I promptly agreed and set about securing the approval required, blithely unaware that if I were to succeed I was to be required to undertake the first year myself, assess the value of the exercise and compile a report of approval or otherwise. The scheme would require acknowledgement and recognition from both sides of the House if it were to survive its initial birth pains.

Nor did I ever think it possible at that time, that more than twenty years later I would be composing yet another report of activity on the scheme – the latest of many and sadly on this occasion my last.



The scheme has been really kind to me over the years providing opportunities to graduate from the navy, the marines, the army and the air force and also enjoy many additional years of advanced learning.

The hours spent, lessons learned and effort made have always been of real benefit throughout.

In 1987 I was delegated from Westminster to the North Atlantic Assembly, now known as the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. Since that time I have held a number of different positions and have written many reports for presentation at its biannual plenary sessions. Throughout this time the scheme has proved to be of inestimable value in augmenting and enhancing the work required of me by the assembly.



As well as giving “hands on” experience of military tasks in the various disciplines of defence, the scheme creates lasting levels of understanding between political opponents within the House. This year’s activities have included a superb “sit in” on CinC Fleet’s briefing at Whale Island the day before Sir Mark Stanhope’s promotion was announced.

“The scheme has proved to be of inestimable value”

An attempt to visit the Falkland Islands in July resulted in four days learning about the American tracking base on Ascension Island, seventeen hours with old friends on board HMS Gloucester and visiting the RAF before returning home after a much changed plan as the runway was snowbound.

It is always uplifting to spend time recalling and recording the magnificent spirit displayed by our young men and women as they go about their business on our behalf.

I started this piece recalling the moment that I first considered the suggestion of starting the scheme. In conclusion I feel entirely justified in paying credit for its conception and development and offering congratulations on the resounding success it has been to the man who first thought of it, developed it and perfected it with such care and determination – Sir Neil Thorne OBE TD DL.

A letter from the Duke of Edinburgh's Office



From: Brigadier Sir Miles Hunt-Davis, K.C.V.O., C.B.E.
Private Secretary to H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh

BUCKINGHAM PALACE

23rd February, 2010

Sy dew Neil,

The Duke of Edinburgh has asked me to write and tell you how much he enjoyed last night's dinner in Westminster.

The whole evening was a very good indication of how successful you have been at involving members of the political arena in the Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme. The number of individuals and the variety of their military backgrounds was a very clear indication of how effective the Scheme continues to be.

His Royal Highness is only too aware of the intricacies involved in planning this dinner and you must be very proud of how successful this occasion was.

*As ever,
Miles.*

Sir Neil Thorne, O.B.E., T.D.
Chairman, Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme

BUCKINGHAM PALACE, LONDON. SW1A 1AA
TELEPHONE: 020 7930 4832 FACSIMILE: 020 7839 5402



Members of Parliament who have taken part in the

1989	Ian Bruce MP (C)	RN	1998	Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP (C)	RAF
	Frank Cook MP (L)	A		Gillian Merron MP (L)	RAF
	John Greenway MP (C)	RAF			
1990	Gareth Wardell MP (L)	RN	Paul Keetch MP (LD)	RN	
	Mike Woodcock MP (C)	RN	Anne McGuire MP (L)	RN	
	Dr John Reid MP (L)	A	Kerry Pollard MP (L)	RN	
	Graham Riddick MP (C)	A	Marion Roe MP (C)	RN	
	Neville Trotter MP (C)	RAF	Mark Todd MP (L)	RN	
			Michael Fabricant MP (C)	RM	
1991	Tom Cox MP (L)	RN	Stephen Hepburn MP (L)	RM	
	John Townend MP (C)	RN	The Hon Lindsay Hoyle MP (L)	RM	
	Dr Calum MacDonald MP (L)	A	Syd Rapson BEM MP (L)	RM	
	Gary Waller MP (C)	A	David Borrow MP (L)	A	
	Richard Alexander MP (C)	RAF	Nick Hawkins MP (C)	A	
	Martyn Jones MP (L)	RAF	Jonathan Shaw MP (L)	A	
1992	Roger Gale MP (C)	RN	Rt Hon Sir George Young Bt MP (C)	A	
	Austin Mitchell MP (L)	RN	Brian Donohoe MP (L)	RAF	
	James Cran MP (C)	RM	Ann Keen MP (L)	RAF	
	John McWilliam MP (L)	RM	Dr Julian Lewis MP (C)	RAF	
	Peter Hardy MP (L)	RAF	Joan Walley MP (L)	RAF	
	Jerry Hayes MP (C)	RAF			
1993	Tim Devlin MP (C)	RN	1999	David Heath CBE MP (LD)	RN
	Ian Davidson MP (L)	RM		Ivan Henderson MP (L)	RN
	John Wilkinson MP (C)	RM		Tony McWalter MP (L)	RN
	Harold Elletson MP (C)	A		Viscount Massereene & Ferrard (C)	RN
	Adam Ingram MP (L)	A		Stephen Pound MP (L)	RN
	Nigel Evans MP (C)	RAF		David Crausby MP (L)	RM
	Terry Lewis MP (L)	RAF		Earl of Denbigh & Desmond (C)	RM
1994	Andrew Hargreaves MP (C)	RN	Lord Newall (C)	RM	
	Rachel Squire MP (L)	RN	David Drew MP (L)	A	
	David Jamieson MP (L)	RM	Lorna Fitzsimons MP (L)	A	
	Mike O'Brien MP (L)	A	Christopher Fraser MP (C)	A	
	Hugh Bayley MP (L)	RAF	Gerald Howarth MP (C)	A	
	Cheryl Gillan MP (C)	RAF	Bob Russell MP (LD)	A	
1995	Jamie Cann MP (L)	RN	2000	Peter Bottomley MP (C)	RAF
	Michael Stephen MP (C)	RN		Tony Colman MP (L)	RAF
	Dr Robert Spink MP (C)	RM		Stephen McCabe MP (L)	RAF
	Edward Garnier QC MP (C)	A		Dan Norris MP (L)	RAF
	Jimmy Hood MP (L)	A			
	Walter Sweeney MP (C)	A		Anne McIntosh MP (C)	RN
	Philip Gallie MP (C)	RAF		Linda Perham MP (L)	RN
1996	Alan Keen MP (L)	RAF	Gwyn Prosser MP (L)	RN	
			Glyn Ford MEP (L)	RM	
	Peter Luff MP (C)	RN	Claire Ward MP (L)	RM	
	Andrew Miller MP (L)	RN	Nicholas Winterton MP (C)	A	
	Sir Roger Moate MP (C)	RM	Lord Dholakia OBE DL (LD)	RAF	
	Paddy Tipping MP (L)	RM	David Stewart MP (L)	RAF	
	John Home Robertson MP (L)	A	Rt Hon Gavin Strang MP (L)	RAF	
1997	Lady Olga Maitland MP (C)	A	Post Graduates		
	Piers Merchant MP (C)	RAF		Rachel Squire MP (L)	RN
	Gerry Steinberg MP (L)	RAF		Ian Bruce MP (C)	RM
				John McWilliam MP (L)	RM
	Jim Murphy MP (L)	RN		James Gray MP (C)	A
	David Wilshire MP (C)	RN		Martyn Jones MP (L)	RAF
	Andrew Mackinlay MP (L)	RM		Dr Julian Lewis MP (C)	RAF
1999	Michael Connarty MP (L)	A	2001	Richard Burden MP (L)	RN
	James Gray MP (C)	A		Lord Faulkner of Worcester (L)	RN
				Baroness Fookes of Plymouth DBE DL (C)	RN
				Debra Shipley MP (L)	RN
2000			2002	Lord Ponsonby of Shulbrede (L)	RM

Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme – 1989 to 2010

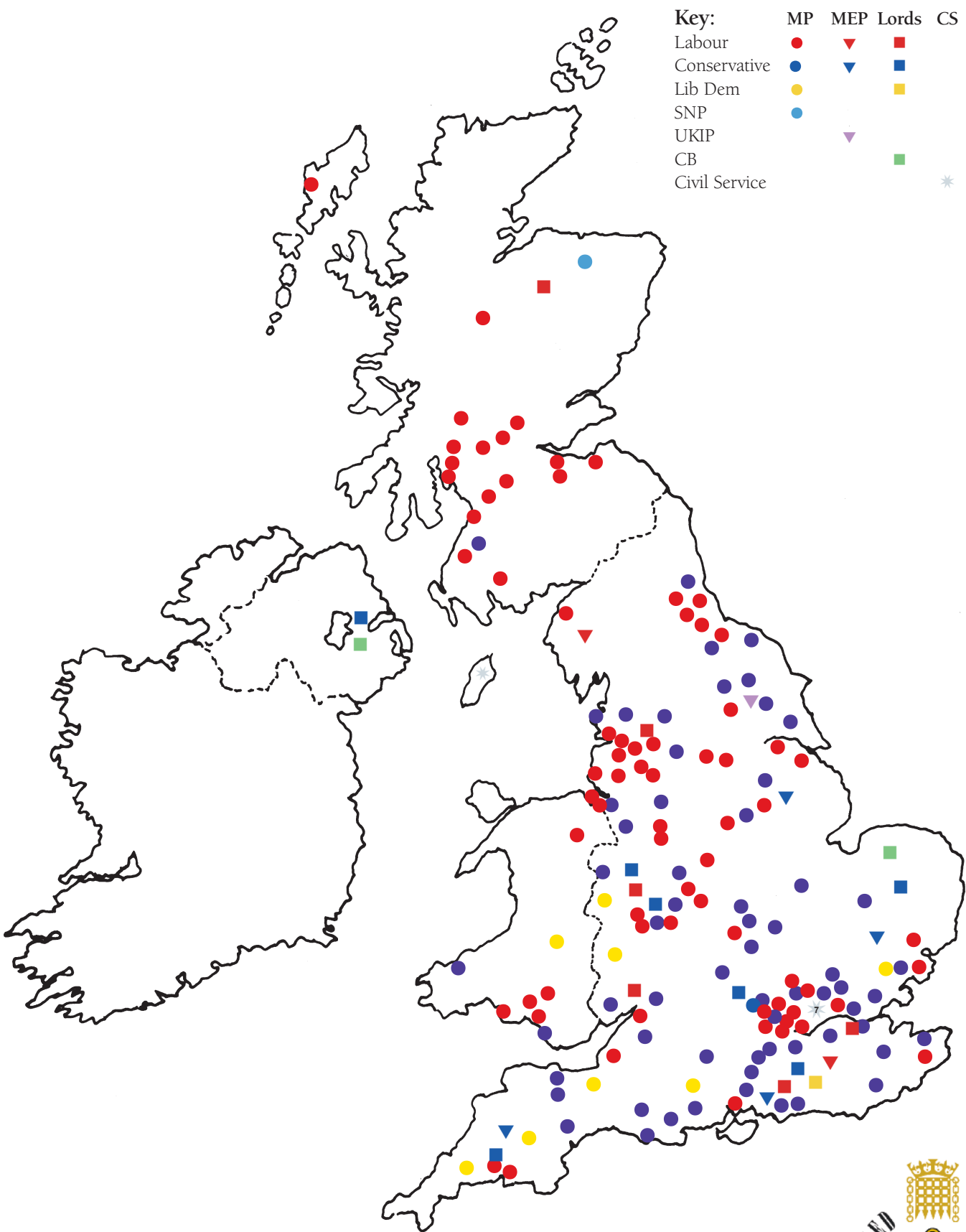
	Lord Rogan (CB)	RM	2004	Ian Cawsey MP (L)	RN
	Brian Simpson MEP (L)	RM		Neil Turner MP (L)	RN
	Earl of Onslow (C)	A		Sandra Osborne MP (L)	RM
	Lord Tomlinson (L)	A		Roger Williams MP (LD)	A
	David Watts MP (L)	A			
	Chris Heaton-Harris MEP (C)	RAF			
	Post Graduates			Post Graduates	
	Roger Gale MP (C)	RN		Tom Cox MP (L)	RN
	Frank Cook MP (L)	RM		Dr Julian Lewis MP (C)	RN
				Dame Marion Roe DBE MP (C)	RN
2002	Lord Bridges GCMG (CB)	RN		Dai Havard MP (L)	A
	Matthew Green MP (LD)	RN		Dr Calum MacDonald MP (L)	A
	Edward Leigh MP (C)	RN		Rt Hon Gavin Strang MP (L)	RAF
	Mark Prisk MP (C)	RN			
	Adrian Flook MP (C)	RM		Advanced Post Graduates	
	Andrew Rosindell MP (C)	RM	2005	Rachel Squire MP (L)	RN
	Gregory Barker MP (C)	A			
	Sandra Gidley MP (LD)	A		Godfrey Bloom TD MEP (UKIP)	RN
	Dai Havard MP (L)	A		Giles Chichester MEP (C)	RN
	Stephen O'Brien MP (C)	A		Stuart Dent (MoD)	RM
	Angus Robertson MP (SNP)	RAF		Ian Stewart MP (L)	RM
	Clive Soley MP (L)	RAF		David Wright MP (L)	RM
				Dan Rosenfield (Treasury)	A
	Post Graduates			Richard Ashworth MEP (C)	RAF
	Peter Luff MP (C)	RN		Geoffrey Van Orden MEP (C)	RAF
	Andrew Miller MP (L)	RN			
	Stephen Pound MP (L)	RN		Post Graduates	
	Nick Hawkins MP (C)	A		Frank Cook MP (L)	RN
	Gerald Howarth MP (C)	A		Ian Davidson MP (L)	RM
2003	David Hamilton MP (L)	RN		David Heath CBE MP (LD)	RM
	Brian Jenkins MP (L)	RN		Michael Connarty MP (L)	A
	Hugh Robertson MP (C)	RN		David Drew MP (L)	A
	John Robertson MP (L)	RN		Peter Bottomley MP (C)	RAF
	Dr Howard Stoate MP (L)	RN		Brian Donohoe MP (L)	RAF
	Russell Brown MP (L)	RM		Gerald Howarth MP (C)	RAF
	Ben Chapman MP (L)	RM			
	Kevan Jones MP (L)	RM		Advanced Post Graduates	
	Peter Skinner MEP (L)	RM		Roger Gale MP (C)	RN
	Hugo Swire MP (C)	RM	2006	Andrew Miller MP (L)	RN
	Claire Curtis-Thomas MP (L)	A		Tony Baldry MP (C) †	A
	Caroline Flint MP (L)	A			
	Hon Bernard Jenkin MP (C)	A		Jason Bradbury (MoD)	RM
	John Lyons MP (L)	A		Christopher Bryant MP (L)	A
	Richard Younger-Ross MP (LD)	A		Robert Ffello MP (L)	A
	Frank Cook MP (L)	RAF		Colin Breed MP (LD)	RAF
	Tony Cunningham MP (L)	RAF		Ian Liddell-Grainger MP (C)	RAF
	Jonathan Djanogly MP (C)	RAF			
	Post Graduates			Post Graduates	
	Brian Simpson MEP (L)	RM		Austin Mitchell MP (L)	RN
	David Borrow MP (L)	A		David Wilshire MP (C)	RN
	Edward Garnier QC MP (C)	A		Tobias Ellwood MP (C) †	RM
	David Stewart MP (L)	RAF		Lord Rogan (CB)	A
				Chris Heaton-Harris MEP (C)	RAF
	Advanced Post Graduates			Adam Holloway MP(C) †	RAF
	John McWilliam MP (L)	RM		Andrew Rosindell MP (C)	RAF
	James Gray MP (C)	A			
				Advanced Post Graduates	
				Earl Attlee (C) †	A
				Edward Garnier QC MP (C)	A
				Rt Hon Michael Mates MP (C) †	A
				Dr Julian Lewis MP (C)	RAF

2007	Robert Goodwill MP (C)	A	Madeleine Moon MP (L)	RAF
	Mark Pritchard MP (C)	A	Claire Taylor (Defence Analyst H of C)	RAF
	Philip Hollobone MP (C)	RAF	Juan Watterson MKH	RAF
Post Graduates				
	Baroness Fookes of Plymouth DBE DL (C)	RN	Philip Hollobone MP (C)	RN
	Lord Faulkner of Worcester (L)	RN	Ian Liddell-Grainger MP (C)	RAF
	Christopher Fraser MP (C)	A	Earl of Shrewsbury & Waterford DL (C) †	RAF
	Stephen O'Brien MP (C)	A		
	Bob Russell MP (LD)	A	Advanced Post Graduates	
	Godfrey Bloom TD MEP (UKIP)	RAF	Baroness Fookes of Plymouth DBE DL (C)	RM
	Mark Lancaster TD MP (C) †	RAF	Godfrey Bloom TD MEP (UKIP)	A
			Lord Rogan (CB)	A
Advanced Post Graduates				
	Frank Cook MP (L)	RN	Further Advanced Post Graduates	
	Gerald Howarth MP (C)	RAF	Roger Gale MP (C)	RN
2008	Alison Seabeck MP (L)	RN	Gerald Howarth MP (C)	RN
	Robert Walter MP (C)	RN	James Gray MP (C)	A
	Baroness Warwick of Undercliffe (L)	RN	Frank Cook MP (L)	RAF
	Stephen Crabb MP (C)	RM		
	Mark Harper MP (C)	A	2010	
	Sally Keeble MP (L)	A	Lord Haworth (L)	RN
	Shailesh Vara MP (C)	RAF	Lord Young of Norwood Green (L)	RN
			Jonathan Black (Treasury)	RM
			Chris Shaw (Clk H of C)	A
Post Graduates				
	Nigel Evans MP (C)	RN	Post Graduates	
	Neil Turner MP (L)	RN	David Hamilton MP (L)	RN
Further Advanced Post Graduates				
	Andrew Miller MP (L)	RN	Advanced Post Graduates	
	Earl Attlee (C)	A	Dai Havard MP (L)	A
	Dr Julian Lewis MP (C)	RAF	Further Advanced Post Graduates	
			Dr Julian Lewis MP (C)	A
2009	Linda Gilroy MP (L)	RN		
	James Rhys (Clk H of C)	RM	†	Advanced on first participation by virtue of previous military experience
	Mike Penning MP (C)	A		



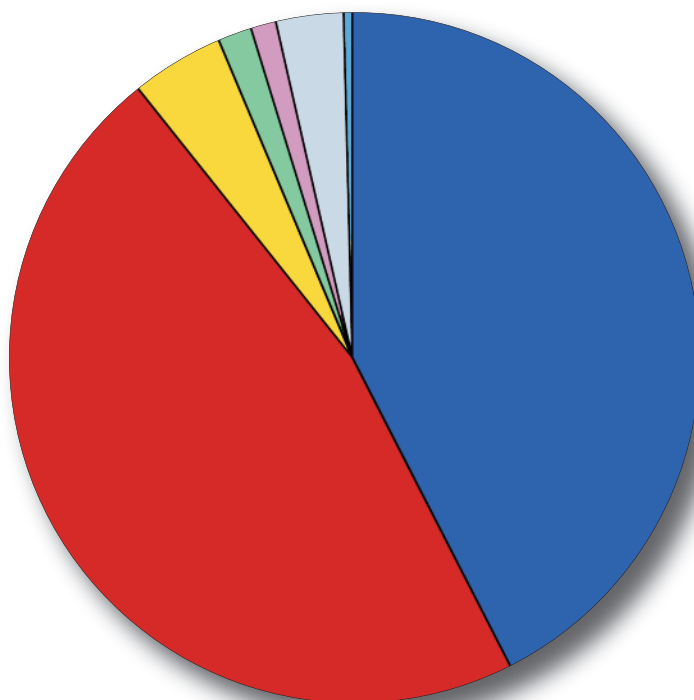
2011 Introduction Course, Shrivenham

Distribution of Participants



AFPS – Graduates by party, 1989 – 2010

Key:
● Labour
● Conservative
● Lib Dem
● CB
● SNP
● UKIP
● Civil Service



Acknowledgements

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The Rt Hon John Bercow MP

The Speaker and President of the Scheme

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Founder, Chairman and Director of the Scheme

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Major General Jonathan Shaw CBE

Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff

Lt Cdr Toby Everitt RN

Military Assistant to Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff

Commander Kris Nicholson RN

and Mr Richard Crossby

Directorate of Naval Staff MoD

Co-ordinators of the Royal Navy and the Royal Marines Programme

Major Sam Bramall QRL

Staff Officer 2 Comm Plans

Co-ordinator of the Army Programme

Wing Commander Philip Lamb MA BTh RAF

and Sqn Ldr Emma Watkins BSc PG RAF

Directorate of Air Staff MoD

Co-ordinators of the Royal Air Force Programme

Support

Ms Elizabeth Hunt

Editor

Mr Peter R Hunt

Graphic Designer

Barclay's Print

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Website

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