



## THE ARMED FORCES PARLIAMENTARY SCHEME A BRIEF HISTORY

- In the early 1980's it was clear that an increasing proportion of Members of Parliament had no previous military experience.
- A trial for the scheme took place in 1988 with 3 members. One Conservative Member with the Royal Navy another with the Royal Air Force and a Labour Member with the Army on condition that none of this expenditure should fall upon the tax payer. The Plessey Company, BAE and Vickers agreed to pay £1,500 each leaving the Chairman to pay the £10,500 shortfall out of his own pocket.
- After the successful trial the then Secretary of State for Defence agreed that 2 candidates could be invited to serve with the Army, the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force, one from each side of the House. Attachments were for 22 days in the honorary rank of Major or equivalent, but really to study and experience the role equivalent of the private, corporal, sergeant and warrant officer.
- With the change of government in 1997, Secretary of State George (now Lord) Robertson asked that the scheme be expanded to 5 participants in each service. This was agreed after the sponsors gave an undertaking to cover all of the costs which the Chairman had previously shared equally with them out of his own taxed income.
- There was a review in 1999 on how to maintain the interest of previous participants, so a post-graduate scheme was started in 2000 for an additional 2 in each service. This was nominally at a Lt Col or equivalent level but really to study and experience the role of the Lieutenant, the Captain and the Major equivalent.
- A second review was requested by Geoffrey Hoon who in 2000 asked that MEP's be included.
- At the request of Ministers and with the consent of the then Secretary of State a facility was obtained in 2003 for 4 members to participate at the Royal College of Defence Studies.
- To date over 200 have graduated from the scheme of which more than 100 are still in parliament including, The Rt Hon Sir George Young, The Rt Hon Lord (John) Reid of Cardowan, The Rt Hon Caroline Flint, The Rt Hon Anne McGuire, The Rt Hon Cheryl Gillan The Rt Hon Jim Murphy and The Rt Hon Bob Ainsworth. In addition 57 have completed the post-graduate course, 19 the advanced post-graduate course and 11 the further advanced post-graduate course. A one year break between each level is applied.
- The breakdown to date of graduates by party affiliation is as follows:-

	<b>Lab</b>	<b>Con</b>	<b>LD</b>	<b>CB</b>	<b>DUP</b>	<b>SNP</b>	<b>UKIP</b>	<b>Other</b>
Graduate	92	87	9	2	1	1	1	9
Post grad	25	28	2	1			1	
Adv post grad	6	11		1			1	
Further adv pg	4	6					1	