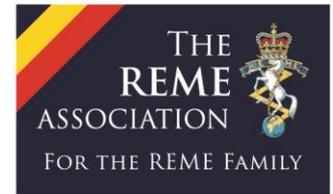




REME ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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NUMBER 22 – Aug 19

REME Association Executive Regional Reps. The following appointments have been confirmed by the Executive Committee: Col (Retd) Mike Crabbe will take over in SE and London with effect from 1st October in time for the next committee meeting on 3rd, and Mike Evans of our Bristol branch in SW region later in the year when Bob Hamilton stands down. I am sure you will join me in thanking Bob Hambly of the SE and London region and Bob Hamilton of SW for their outstanding service and contribution to The REME Association. We all wish them and their families well for the future.

HM The Queen's Birthday Honours 2019. I ran out of space on the last newsletter so failed to mention the two members of the Corps included on HM The Queen's Birthday Honours List announced in June. Our current Master General REME, Lt Gen Paul Jaques CBE was appointed to the Military Division of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath so now his full correct title is Lt Gen PW Jaques CB CBE. Also, delighted to announce that Lt Col Paul Denton was awarded the MBE. I am sure you will join me in sending our warmest congratulations to both officers.

Operation LEGACY. The Corps Secretary recently attended a briefing on Op LEGACY which is being run by the Army Personnel Support Group (APSG) based in the MoD. Op LEGACY is investigating historical allegations brought against the MoD, and while the majority are based around Northern Ireland there remain some involving the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Northern Ireland is the main focus as there remains a large number of open cases and it could take many years to get through them all. The message from APSG is one of supporting the soldier through what they recognise will be a very traumatic experience. They are working with the Director of Judicial Engagement and Policy (DJEP) who are legal experts and the Veterans' Welfare Service to provide support if required.

Currently, cases involving the Parachute Regiment and Queen's Regiment are taking prominence in the media, but the Intelligence Corps and Special Forces veterans are also being called. Although no one in REME has been contacted to date, it is likely that sometime in the future, a former REME soldier most likely but not necessarily deployed in the infantry role, will be contacted by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and asked to provide evidence. The message from APSG is very clear and it encourages former soldiers to testify and tell the truth; they do not want a twisted version of the truth to be recorded in history.

From a REME Association and RHQ REME perspective, if a REME veteran is contacted by the Crown Prosecution Service over an Op LEGACY issue, the first call they should make is to the Corps Secretary, Lt Col (Retd) Mike Tizard on 01249 894520. The Corps Secretary will arrange for support (legal and potentially financial) through the APSG/DJEP and the Veterans' Welfare Service. The REME Association is here to support you, do not ignore any CPS contact but call Mike Tizard immediately.

Lt Col (Retd) Stuart Cowen 🦋 association@reme-rhq.org.uk 🦋 07590 848766
RHQ REME

Government Consultation on Legal Protection. Clearly linked to the previous item the Government has launched a wide consultation on legal protections for armed forces personnel and veterans. I do note however, this is for those serving outside the UK only. Nevertheless this is a worthwhile exercise so if you have time please join the debate at the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/legal-protections-for-armed-forces-personnel-and-veterans-serving-in-operations-outside-the-united-kingdom>

REME Benevolence and Welfare. RHQ REME employs two members of staff in the Benevolence office, Ms Bev Bate and Ms Pamela Bailey-Yates, and also has a serving Welfare Warrant Officer. WO2 Stew Blakey has now left the Army, we thank him sincerely for his outstanding service, wish him well in his second career and welcome WO2 Kelvin Redshaw to the post. They all do fantastic work on behalf of the REME Family but, as a relatively small organisation, what they cannot provide is casework. Our casework is provided by other agencies, most notably SSAFA and Royal British Legion. What this means is if you find yourself, or are aware of somebody in need that may require help or advice, please go directly to the local Royal British Legion or SSAFA Regional Office in the first instance. These organisations give advice and will task caseworkers where appropriate. Of course, advice may be sought from Bev, Pam or Kelvin but casework comes from these other agencies. Serving personnel may access support through their Unit Welfare staff or the service related charities already mentioned. As a case develops The REME Charity is often asked to contribute financially alongside the other charities.

SSAFA - 0800 731 4880 from 9.00 to 17.30 weekdays. At other times a message can be left.

<https://www.ssafa.org.uk>

The Royal British Legion – 0808 802 8080 from 8am to 8pm, 7 days a week.

<https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/about-us/contact-us/>

National Insurance Credits for Partners/Spouses. For any accompanying spouses or civil partners of servicemen/women posted abroad it is possible to claim National Insurance Credits for the time spent abroad. This helps fill any gaps in your National Insurance record. If you were unaware of this and think you may be affected go to:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-insurance-credits-for-partners-of-armed-forces-personnel-overseas>

Retired Overseas? I have mentioned this before but it is critical that any member of the Armed Forces Pensions Schemes living abroad reports any changes of circumstances that may affect their pension. One area of concern for Veterans UK is the 'Life Certification Exercise' that still has some 200+ outstanding responses. If you have been involved in this exercise and not replied you may find your pension is suspended. Bet you reply then! For details go to:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ensuring-the-right-payments-are-made-to-the-right-people>

Armed Forces Pay Award 2019. The Armed Forces Pay Review Body (AFPRB) has recommended a headline 2.9% pay increase for all personnel up to 1 Star level. The Government has accepted the recommendations in full. Stand by for the pension announcement which is usually September.

KEEP IN TOUCH STAY INFORMED

Veterans' Affairs. You may have noticed HM Government has created an office for Veterans' Affairs and appointed Oliver Dowden CBE MP as Minister representing veterans in cabinet. He will work closely with former Gunner officer Johnny Mercer MP who has been appointed Minister for Defence People and Veterans. Here's the detail and I am sure sorting out an application process for the Veterans' ID Card is in the In Tray.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-creates-new-office-for-veterans-affairs-to-provide-lifelong-support-to-military-personnel>

Speaking of which. Here's the latest update. I am not sure it gives us anything we didn't know but it is a useful reminder nonetheless.

<https://www.forces.net/military-life/veterans/uk-veteran-id-cards-all-gen-about-them>

Here's the full team at MOD;

Secretary of State for Defence: **Rt Hon Ben Wallace MP**

Minister of State for the Armed Forces: **Mark Lancaster TD MP**

Minister of State for Defence in the House of Lords: **Baroness Annabel Goldie DL**

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State: **Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP**

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State: **Johnny Mercer MP**

Armed Forces Veterans Breakfast Club. Some of you may be unaware of this initiative. Dereck Hardman came up with the idea after visiting Pete Barker, a REME Veteran in his garage, and chatting over a brew whilst working on a 'project vehicle'. Before long the group had expanded and they were meeting regularly, swinging the lamp and finding it great fun whilst also providing terrific support to the local Veterans' community in Hull. The idea took off and the Club was born. It has now expanded nationwide, indeed worldwide. If you fancy a brew and a chat with like-minded people there may be one near you. Check out the website below.

<https://www.afvbc.net/>

AND FINALLY - Fitting in - now you're a Civvy. I picked this up from Forces Network recently. Bet you laugh out loud like I did!

<https://www.forces.net/military-life/fun/your-guide-fitting-civvies-after-leaving-forces>

Summary. That concludes the latest Newsletter. Again, I include a print version for ease of printing in hard copy for re-distribution and cascade. Please keep your feedback coming.

Arte et Marte.