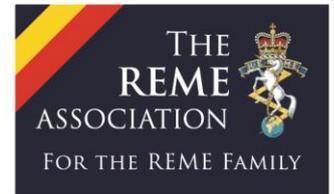




REME ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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NUMBER 25 – Jan 20

Annual Voluntary Charitable Donations. Sincere thanks to the great many of you that have chosen to make an annual voluntary charitable donation to the REME Charity. The vast majority of our serving soldiers and officers contribute through the Day’s Pay Scheme and those that don’t probably don’t realise they aren’t so it is not a conscious omission. Most do so when it is pointed out. For the REME Veteran community, since we began this drive your support has been magnificent and the annual total raised continues to grow. Heartfelt thanks. As we have mentioned many times, a smaller Army equals a smaller Corps equals fewer contributing. If you have yet to complete the forms and would like to do so please reply to this email and I will forward them immediately. No sum is too small. Thank you for your consideration and please spread the word.

New Year Honours 2020. A terrific list for the Corps:

General Sir Patrick Sanders KCB CBE DSO ADC Gen – our former Colonel Commandant is knighted.
Colonel Clare Phillips CBE – former Colonel REME is awarded the CBE.
Lt Col John Hanson OBE – is awarded the OBE to add to his MBE and imminent promotion to Colonel.
Maj Chris Ayres MBE }
WO1 Nigel Black MBE } all awarded the MBE.
WO1 Jamie Clarke MBE }
Maj Michael Green MBE }

Delighted to see good work by our Corps members rewarded. Congratulations to all and enjoy your day at the Palace. A good year for John Hanson!

REME WW2 Veterans. The plea from Robin Cross in seeking REME Veterans of WW2 to tell their story has resulted in a good take up. Thank you. Any El Alamein Veterans out there? Please let me know as a REME Arms School project is seeking volunteers willing to be interviewed.

Cancer Research. A message from Major (Retd) Richard House who is doing a bit of a walk to support pancreatic cancer research. Sadly, Richard’s wife Jenny died last August after a year with the disease. Our hearts go out to Richard and all his family and friends and the link below is your chance to support the walk. Please help if you can.

<https://interconnectedview.org/>

Discover My Benefits. Not a link for Universal Credit but an MOD initiative to help retention. If you are still serving, have a look to help your decision if you think you may leave early. Veterans may also be interested to see how things have changed since their day. For the better or worse? You decide.

<https://discovermybenefits.mod.gov.uk/>

Lt Col (Retd) Stuart Cowen 🇬🇧 association@reme-rhq.org.uk 🇬🇧 07590 848766
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Mental Health. The REME Association is there for us all and is the glue that bonds the REME Family together. It is where we can turn to find former comrades who wore our cap-badge and have shared our experiences if we are in need of a chat and a friendly face. There are some though that are in need of much more. I am sure like me you have been deeply moved by the news stories in recent years highlighting the mental health and PTSD struggles many of our former comrades are facing. Please ensure all your branch and group members are aware that The REME Charity is here to help and help us ensure that no one suffers in silence. The REME Charity and our Welfare Warrant Officer, WO2 Kelvin Redshaw, works closely with service charities, in particular the RBL and SSAFA but also Combat Stress. The link is below and please ensure anyone you know who may be struggling knows where to turn.

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

Armed Forces & Veterans' Breakfast Club. Similarly, you may be aware of the Armed Forces & Veterans' Breakfast Club that operates all over the UK and indeed overseas. A good place to chat.

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

Veterans' Railcards. Still no news on our Veterans' ID Cards but I am sure you will have all seen the recent good news with the Veterans' Railcards to be launched on Armistice Day, Wednesday 11 November 2020. Full details will follow but it is expected to be up to a third off train travel with spouses/ partners included if travelling with the Veteran. The link below has the latest.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-fulfils-promise-to-veterans-with-new-railcard>

Although not mentioned in that link, government ministers were quoted elsewhere declaring the Government's vision was for UK Veterans to be treated similarly to those in the US where former servicemen and women enjoy many benefits and a comparatively higher profile. Should be interesting.

Veterans UK. I am sure you are all aware that the Veterans UK website is available to us all and is a useful one stop shop for issues such as medals, armed forces compensation and pensions etc. Here's the link.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/veterans-uk>

Cobseo. The Confederation of Service Charities (Cobseo) publishes regular updates on their strategies and engagements with HM Government. All interesting stuff but it can be a heavy read. The link below is to their website and all documents are available for download from there. Just follow the 'News' tab.

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

KEEP IN TOUCH STAY INFORMED

New Cabinet. Following the recent General Election a change at the MOD has seen the MP for Wells, Somerset and former Rifles Major, James Heapey MP appointed Minister for Defence Procurement. All other Defence posts are unchanged.

Armed Forces Pensions – Annual Allowance. Many of you will have seen the news over the last week or so where the Government is looking at how some of the unintended consequences of this change can be alleviated. The effects have been highlighted in the NHS where Consultants and other professionals have declined additional work as it was costing them to do so. In the MoD the worries are primarily the unfairness as AFPS members have no control over what is paid into their pension pots each year but also the effects on retention and that some may decline promotion as it could result in a large tax bill. Of those who breached the annual allowance last year some 400 were NCOs so this is clearly not just affecting highly paid senior officers. We will keep monitoring.

Living in Europe after Brexit. For UK Nationals living in the EU, EEA or Switzerland after Brexit read this government guidance.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-nationals-in-the-eu-benefits-and-pensions-in-a-no-deal-scenario>

Forces Pension Society. I am sure you are all aware of the good work the Society does on our behalf but if not check out their website. There is a charge for membership but you never know when you might need them.

<https://forcespensionsociety.org>

RUSI. I picked this up from Forces Network. I am sure like me you always listen carefully when Professor Michael Clarke speaks. Interesting stuff although we all know what turns to rats as soon as the battle begins or we get punched in the mouth – the plan!

<https://www.forces.net/news/2020-defence-what-will-happen-year>

Last Day in Service. I enjoyed this, again from Forces Network. A bit more light-hearted.

<https://www.forces.net/military-life/last-day-armed-forces-what-it-really>

Summary. That concludes the latest Newsletter. I hope you finding these useful and a key connection with our Corps. I have tested the on-line links and they all seem fine but if they do not work for you I trust you have enough words there to put it in your browser and find the relevant pages. Good job we are a technical Corps! A belated Happy New Year.

Arte et Marte.

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