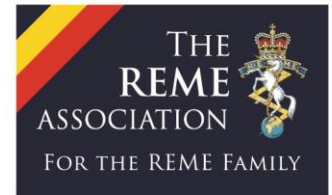




# REME ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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NUMBER 26 – Mar 20

**Executive Committee.** The Executive committee of the REME Association sat on 9 March 2020 under the chairmanship of Brigadier Nigel Williams MBE. Much useful business was discussed and your regional representatives will be able to update you all in the fullness of time. In the past few months I have been in close contact with many associations and organisations similar to us to seek out best practice and discuss our shared problems and difficulties. Unsurprisingly, they all reported similarly i.e. ageing membership, maintaining a branch structure with dwindling volunteers and an apparent reluctance for younger people to engage or be involved. No one had a magic bullet or readily available solution. Interestingly, Sandra Fruish, Asst Dir of Membership at Royal British Legion pointed out that this is a sector wide concern i.e. it is worrying all membership organisations not just military. Lt Col (Retd) Mike Tizard, Corps Secretary and Chief Executive of the REME Charity is in discussion with the Trustees to fund a campaign manager to help us drive the Association forward. We all care about the Corps but we perhaps need some expert help in this field. If you have the passion, energy and time and can help or can help us find the right expert knowledge please let me know. One aim is to double the readership of this newsletter within a year.

**Services Charity funding.** Further to the research above you will have seen the rather worrying news that Combat Stress are taking on no new cases and will now refer to the NHS and the Officers' Association are having their RBL welfare grant withdrawn in stages between now and 2024. Funding and support worries are clearly services sector wide.

**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 Kelvin Redshaw. 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, you will need to chat directly with your local RBL or SSAFA Regional Office. These organisations give advice and will task caseworkers where appropriate. Of course, if you want to talk to Bev, Pam or Kelvin as a friendly and familiar face first please do so on 01249 894523 or 4522 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/>

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**Mental Health.** Useful advice here from Forces Network.

[https://www.forces.net/mental-health/dont-bottle-it-how-cope-ptsd-and-mental-health-issues?utm\\_source=Forces+Network+Newsletter&utm\\_campaign=74e2e87857-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2020\\_02\\_06\\_06\\_44&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_25712c5f6f-74e2e87857-441001569](https://www.forces.net/mental-health/dont-bottle-it-how-cope-ptsd-and-mental-health-issues?utm_source=Forces+Network+Newsletter&utm_campaign=74e2e87857-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_02_06_06_44&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_25712c5f6f-74e2e87857-441001569)

**Wales.** Lt Col (Retd) Syd Thomas has taken over as Wales Regional rep and needs your help. He wants to replicate the success of Scotland branch which has satellite groups all over the country where the REME Family meets for social events and support and there is no reason this model cannot be equally successful in Wales. Syd is based in Bridgend so the Swansea region is well served but what about everywhere else? If you live in Wales and would like to engage or perhaps form your own branch or informal group in your own area, let me know and I will pass your contact details onto Syd. Dewch ymlaen Cymru.

**Jim Fox OBE.** Our welfare WO Kelvin Redshaw along with Ms Bev Bate, our SO2 Benevolence and I were privileged to be invited to accompany REME Olympic hero Jim Fox to visit Pentathlon GB at their training camp in Bath earlier this month. They wanted Jim to meet the Pentathletes competing for selection for the GB Olympic team this year. Jim was on good form and they treated him like a King and rightly so. He was given a tour of the facilities, which were a bit more advanced than Jim enjoyed at Arborfield and Sandhurst in his day and a presentation followed of what it means to represent Team GB on the international stage. Truly inspiring. Best of all was the current Pentathlon GB Performance Director was none other than Jan Bartu who competed against Jim in Montreal in 1976, winning team Silver and individual Bronze for Czechoslovakia. Jan was only 21 at the time and recalls the events and in particular Boris Onischenko's disqualification vividly. He also remembers being pipped at the post for the Gold medal by Jim and his team in the final cross-country event. It was jaw-dropping to be in the company of these two Olympic greats as they met for the first time in 40 odd years. Don't forget if you knew Jim and served with him he would love to see you in his Marlborough care home. Details from me.

**Remembrance.** Lt Col (Retd) John Woodall of the Derby/Notts branch, has kindly offered to lay a wreath at the NMA REME Memorial on 11<sup>th</sup> November each year on behalf of all members of the Corps past and present. This is being arranged with RHQ REME. Thank you John.

**Royal Hospital Chelsea.** The Royal Hospital is appealing for more female Pensioners. There are currently 14 and they want to spread the word that the opportunity is there for all former servicemen and women that meet the criteria.

<https://www.forces.net/news/royal-hospital-chelsea-appeals-more-female-pensioners>

**Armed Forces Transition Guide.** About to leave the service? Check out this survival guide and qualifications advice from Forces Network. Two separate links. Good luck.

<https://www.forces.net/military-life/veterans/armed-forces-veteran-transition-and-survival-guide>

[https://www.forces.net/military-life/veterans/leaving-military-and-not-sure-what-to-next?utm\\_source=Forces+Network+Newsletter&utm\\_campaign=6d3209b4ae-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2020\\_02\\_21\\_04\\_04&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_25712c5f6f-6d3209b4ae-441001569](https://www.forces.net/military-life/veterans/leaving-military-and-not-sure-what-to-next?utm_source=Forces+Network+Newsletter&utm_campaign=6d3209b4ae-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_02_21_04_04&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_25712c5f6f-6d3209b4ae-441001569)

## KEEP IN TOUCH STAY INFORMED

**Ministerial Changes.** A few more ministerial changes at the MoD to report. The PM doesn't let the grass grow does he?

<https://www.forces.net/news/jeremy-quin-appointed-defence-minister>

**Veterans' Affairs.** Whilst on the subject a reminder that HM Government created an office for Veterans' Affairs. Here's their latest news which includes an update on the government promise to guarantee veterans an interview for all civil service appointments to start this year.

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

**Military Wives Film.** Out at the moment with good reviews. Looks quite good and will bring us all fond memories of life on the patch I am sure. Sara and I will certainly be going to see it.

**REME Museum.** Delighted to announce the REME Museum has been awarded the prestigious 'Hidden Gem' award by Visit England for an unprecedented 3<sup>rd</sup> year in a row. Congratulations to the Museum Director Maj (Retd) Rick Henderson and his staff. Well done Rick.

Further news for the Museum is our new curator has arrived in post, Ms Sophie Cummings. Sophie is a museum professional with 14 years of experience in the field and we are delighted to have her on board. Welcome. One idea Sophie brings is how best to use REME Veterans as volunteers within the daily museum and heritage operations. She is looking to develop these ideas in the next few months so please take this as a warning order at this stage as there is likely to be a call for volunteers soon. Therefore, if you live within reasonable reach of Lyneham or are able to visit from time to time as you have friends or family in the area thus keeping travel costs to a minimum, and would like to help out as a guide or similar role then please register your potential interest with me. Further details will follow.

**Summary.** That concludes the latest Newsletter. I hope you find these useful and informative and a key connection with our Corps. Please cascade this to all your friends and comrades and encourage anyone not yet signed up go to [www.remecharity.org](http://www.remecharity.org) and click 'join' at the homepage, leave your details, GDPR permissions and away you go.

*Arte et Marte.*

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