

Dear All,

I hope you are all well. Like my last couple of updates the first part of this email is aimed at branch secretaries so apologies for the wide distribution but I want to ensure no branches are missed. The second part is my latest update.

**Part 1.** Sincere thanks to all who have submitted your lists of current active branch members as at 1 Oct 17 in order to establish those that qualify for the free continued membership of the REME Association from 1 Apr 18. To remind you, as a one off gesture the Corps Colonel proposed that all active branch members of the REME Association i.e. those members with branch subs fully paid up as at 1 Oct 17, would not be required to pay the annual membership fee of £15 per annum. I am still diffy some branch lists so please trawl your branch records and pass the lists of your branch active membership as at 1 Oct 17 to me as soon as you can. This need only be a quick and dirty list of names and types of membership, which will give me some idea of the numbers that will qualify for free membership. If it is too difficult to pass names for now then a rough idea of the numbers will be fine. Full individual details will be captured once I send to you the full GDPR compliant form which is still awaiting approval. I will send it as soon as it is ready.

Please warn everyone in your branches that it will be necessary for each member to complete a form giving individual details and permissions. These details are quite comprehensive I am afraid but it is a requirement of GDPR and we must comply or face the prospect of a heavy fine.

**Part 2.** A few things to update you on:

**Fees.** I hear your feedback and your concerns but please – I emphasise – all current active branch members that qualify for a waiver of the annual membership fee will **NEVER** be required to pay the membership fee.

**Roadshows and Association Conference.** As notified previously, you will be aware that the Annual Delegates' Conference we enjoyed in our Bordon and Arborfield days is not possible to continue now the Corps is established in Lyneham. There is simply no spare accommodation, transit or otherwise. Many soldiers attending courses at DSEME are now directed to commute daily if within an hour's travel or if from further afield or abroad their unit stumps up for a local hotel, which at £100min per night is a substantial cost. Times change I am afraid. To plug the gap for the Association we have started a series of Roadshows and the Association Conference will be held during the Reunion Weekend in April. This will be on the Sunday morning and a full programme will be included in your information from IOW tours. The first Roadshow in Wales on 22 Feb 18, to coincide with the branch AGM, went well and sincere thanks to Des, Andrew and all for the kind hospitality shown to the Corps Secretary Mike Tizard and I. The Roadshows in Catterick and Tidworth will be arranged for later in the year and we are stood by to arrange further Roadshow events if demand is there.

**Rules.** Thank you for your feedback so far. The revised rules (The REME 75 Rules) have been sent out to you all in advance of the REME Association Weekend in April to provide your opportunity to comment with the aim to publish as soon as possible following the Weekend. The Jubilee Rules are extant until such time as the REME 75 Rules are published.

These revised rules will need to be supported by a 'Handbook' or something similar which is on my list of things to do this year. There are many useful things that do not need to be a 'rule'.

**Types of Membership.** Some have been asking about the status of 'Honorary, Associate or Family Members' under the new rules. You may have noted the REME 75 Rules contain (at Part 1 Para 4) a list that covers different types. "Serving" and "Former serving" followed at sub-para c and d, "Family of serving or former serving" and "Supporters of, and those with an interest in, the Corps of REME". The aim is to ensure that, for example, those such as civilians that worked in our Workshops or RAC Driver/Mechs that worked alongside our tradesmen are not forgotten and,

should they wish to do so, may apply to join our Association. Of course, such existing members within your branches continue their membership as before.

**Membership Cards.** The aim is for all to have a membership card. This will take a while to roll out so please bear with us.

**Executive Committee Meeting.** The next Executive Committee Meeting is Tue 20 Mar 18. Please pass points that you may wish to see raised to your Regional Reps in advance. As a reminder your Regional Rep should be your immediate point-of-contact for comms in both directions. As notified in my last update, Regional Rep for SE&London is Maj(Retd) Bob Hambly. Overseas branches should pass any points they wish to see raised directly to me.

**New branches.** I mentioned the meeting to discuss a Lyneham Branch. This went well and we will go ahead in three stages. Firstly we will form a 'Group' and the first meeting will be on Tue 22 May at 1900hrs in the Sergeants' Mess, by kind permission of WO1(RSM) Chris Kipling. If successful the 'Group' will evolve into a more formal Lyneham Branch with nominated branch appointments etc. If success continues the branch will then evolve into the non-geographical 'St Eligius Branch' for all members that do not wish to formally join a branch in their area or are unable to do so due to travel distances. For example, I had an email from former WO1(ASM) Brian Langley who has retired to Greece. Brian clearly cannot travel to a branch meeting so the non-geographical branch provides an opportunity for him to stay in touch. This is why we are doing it.

I am delighted that others have been in touch interested in forming groups and hopefully branches in similar stages. Former WO1(ASM) Nigel Cannar in Cumbria and former Sgt Tony Simons on Isle of Wight. Please spread the word and ask anyone you may know living in those areas that may be interested in joining Nigel and Tony for a beer to discuss the possibilities to get in touch with me and I will forward contact details to Nigel and Tony respectively.

Similarly, if you are aware of anyone that may be interested in acting as a Point of Contact in areas not currently covered by our branch network or perhaps to re-open closed branches as informal 'Groups' – ask them to get in touch with me and I will help spread the word.

**Professional Linkages.** Thank you for your feedback to my previous notice on the work of Lt Col (Retd) Dave White here in Lyneham. To remind you Dave works as the Professional Registration Adviser (PRA) to the Corps on individual professional institution membership applications at all levels. I am delighted to announce that following my note David Naylor, President of our Kettering and Corby Branch, has offered to act as a mentor and advisor for REME Association members. David can help with Engineering Institution applications, career options and general advice. Please spread the word and David can be contacted via me in the first instance.

If you are able to or know someone who is able to help perform this role, the more the merrier. If you can help – please let me know.

**Army v Navy 2018.** Our info stand in the REME Bar at Twickenham for the 2018 event on Sat 5 May 18 is confirmed. Hope to see you there.

**Website.** The aspiration is to have all our information available on The REME Charity website accessible via a 'members' login'. I will keep you informed as this develops.

**Benefits.** I remain open to ideas for approaches to businesses etc. that may be interested in offering discounts or other benefits to our members. Many have commented that simple 'discount' websites may not be what we need as we can all access similar facilities through forces or veterans discount sites anyway. I agree but we will give it a try and if it is not worthwhile then we will discontinue after the first year. What is attractive is bespoke offers such as the IAM

RoadSmart one exclusively to our membership. Please let me know of any ideas you may have along similar lines.

**Spam.** Joe Dixon-Haxby at Doncaster branch has warned us all to watch out for spam email from a company called Nixon Hire. Do not open any attachments.

**NHS Veterans.** I am grateful to Major Aide Hunt, Bn 2IC at 102 Bn, for passing the attached NHS veterans note to me. It informs of a Veterans' Mental Health initiative so please pass it on within your branches.

**Summary.** The success of the REME Association thus far is down to you all and sincere thanks for your continued selfless commitment. This project does not seek to fundamentally change what we do but it does seek to improve where we can. Your branch life will continue as before and our aim is to make the Association attractive and relevant to the whole REME Family. It will be a long haul and your patience and support is greatly appreciated. Please bear with us.

*Arte et Marte,*

*Stuart*

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