

ROYAL MARINES FORMATION SIGNS AND TITLES
WORN DURING AND SINCE WORLD WAR II

Shortly after joining the Royal Marines Historical Society, Captain Hennesay asked, as I was already a member of the Military Heraldry Society, if I would act as a liaison between the two Societies. This I agreed to undertake and a notice to this effect was placed in the Military Heraldry Society bulletin "Formation Sign".

Captain Hennesay also suggested that an article on signs and titles worn by Royal Marines would be of great interest for the Newsletter, and I therefore produced the following information for the interest of our members.

The majority of the signs and titles sketched and described are from my own collection. To avoid incorrect information being given, I requested Major Donald, the Corps Historian, to check my rough draft, and I am most grateful to him for his assistance and, where necessary, the additional information he supplied.

Some members may be aware of other signs and titles worn by Royal Marines formations, which are not mentioned in this article. If so, both Major Donald and myself will be most grateful to learn of any additional insignia which may have been worn officially or unofficially. Any correspondence will be acknowledged.

Description of signs and titles illustrated.

- Figure 1. Title. Silk embroidered. Red letters on Blue. Manufactured by CASH's. Issued for wear on B/D.
2. Title. Embroidered on felt. Red letters on D. Blue. Purchased privately - not worn officially. (The Corps Museum possesses a specimen with Blue letters on Red - doubtless a maker's error).
3. Title. Embroidered on felt. Red on D. Blue. Issued for wear on B/D.
4. Title. COMMANDO. Silk embroidered. Red letters on Blue. Made by CASH's. Issued for wear on B/D and worn, when applicable, below Figure 1 Title.
5. Sign. RM Cdo. Red dagger on D. Blue segment. Embroidered on felt.
6. Numerals. RM Cdo. Silk embroidered. Red on Blue. Made by CASH's. Worn above Royal Marines Title (Fig. 1). Similar designs for 41, 45, 47.
7. Numeral. No 46. Embroidered on felt arc. Red on Blue. Similar design for No. 45.
8. Sign. Combined Operations. Printed Red on Blue.
9. Sign. Combined Operations. Embroidered on felt. Red on Blue.
NB. The shape of figures 8 and 9 varied from circular to square with rounded top background. The signs were worn in pairs (with SMG facing forward) on B/D and, in World War II, on No 1 dress.
10. Sign. Royal Marine Division (later 116 Independent Infantry Brigade). Yellow trident on Red segment.
11. Sign. Permanent Staff 104 RM Training Brigade (later Royal Marine Training Groups (Wales) & (Devon)). Yellow seahorse embroidered on Blue circle on Red segment.
The sign was known within the Corps as 'The Pregnant Prawn'.
12. Sign. 117 RM Infantry Brigade. Yellow fouled anchor on Red circle, on Yellow star on Khaki square. (Two versions - one embroidered, one printed). Not generally issued and then only after VE Day. In general use as a vehicle marking, painted on mudguards.
13. Numeral. 31 Bn. (of 117 RM Inf. Bde.). Red figures woven on small khaki square. Worn over Royal Marines title (Fig. 1). Of similar design there was also 32 and 33.
Issued and worn in the Keil area (Germany) after VE Day.

Figure 14. Sign. 34 Royal Marine Amphibious Support Regiment. Embroidered Yellow fouled anchor, on Red segment with Yellow border on Blue shield.

15. Sign. Royal Marines Engineers. Printed. Made by CALICO Co. Ltd., ACCRINGTON, LANCS. Yellow grenade, Green rope fouled on Red anchor, on Blue shield.

16. Sign. Mobile Naval Base Defence Organisation. Polar bear embroidered on Blue, Yellow, Green, Red and Blue diagonal striped circle. This sign may have been spurious or have been worn unofficially. From conversation with former MNBDO personnel, I am unable to confirm a sign ever having been worn. There has been some mention of a vehicle marking of a similar design.

17. Arm of Service strip. 37 Signal Company, Royal Marines. White and Blue felt, 2" x ". Until recently I was under the impression that a white and blue strip was only worn in World War II, by the Royal Corps of Signals (now the Royal Signals). The strip as illustrated, was worn in NW Europe by a former Marine in 37 Sig. Coy. RM, who presented it to my collection.

18. Epaulet - Slip on. Orange braid. Worn by Officers seconded to the RM during World War II, from the Union of South Africa Defence Force.

19. Epaulet - slip on. Title. Red letters on Blue. Worn on tropical shirts.

20. Sign. Royal Marine Seige Regiment. Red grenade woven on khaki.

21. Epaulet - slip on. Dark Blue (not navy) braid. Worn by probationary Cadets RM at the RM Pre-OCTU, Deal and Browndown.

22. Title. Red letters embroidered on Blue arc and bar. The 1st pattern title worn by the Royal Marine Forces Volunteer Reserve in 1948. Replaced later by figures 23 and 24.

23. Title. VR. Embroidered. Red letters on Blue. Made by CASH's. The 2nd pattern title of RMFVR and worn below ROYAL MARINES title (Fig. 1).

24. Title. VR. Embroidered on felt. Red letters on Blue. Worn beneath ROYAL MARINES COMMANDO title (Fig. 3) by all ranks of the RMFVR who completed the Basic Commando Course.

25. Title. R. Embroidered on felt. Red letter on Blue. Replaced figures 23 and 24 on the change of title of the RMFVR to RMR in 1966.

26. Title. 44 RM Cdo. Embroidered on felt. Red on Blue (all in one piece).

27. Title. 46 RM Cdo. Embroidered on felt. Red on Blue (all in one piece).

28. Title. Royal Yacht. Gold wire letters and border surmounted by St. Edward's Crown, on Blue. Of similar design there is also Red on Blue and Gold on Green. Worn by the Band of the Portsmouth Division RM, Portsmouth Group RM and Royal Marines Detachment in the Royal Yacht. The Tudor Crown type was only issued in Gold on Blue and Red on Blue.

29. Red Diamond. Red cloth/felt. Awarded to signify Recruit Section Commanders at the Depot or during final training at the ITCRM. In the days of larger squads usually the 6 best all-round recruits were awarded the Diamond. Nowadays, with smaller squads, only 3 or 4 are awarded.

30. The King's Badge. (Instituted in 1918 by HM King George V). Awarded to the best all-round recruit in the senior recruit squad (King's Squad) by selection by King's Badge Board. Worn at the point of the left shoulder, on all dress (with the exception of shirt sleeve order and working dress) throughout recipient's entire career. Issued in Gold on Blue, Red on Blue, Khaki woven on Khaki, Khaki on K/D, Gold on Red (for Mess Kit) and Gold on Green.

Since publishing the notice in the Military Heraldry Society bulletin, I have received several questions from their members regarding RM formations and signs worn, some of which I have been unable to answer. I have listed some of them below in the hope that readers of the Newsletter may be able to supply me with the answers. Any answers forthcoming will be gratefully received and I will notify the original enquirers.

1. "Did the Sea Reconnaissance Units (RN/RM) have a special sign or badge?".
2. "Did the Combined Operations Pilotage Parties (COPP) have a special insignia other than the Combined Operations Badge?".
3. "Did the RM Boom Patrol Detachments wear a special insignia?".
4. "What was the formation sign or badge (if any) of the following:
Advanced A Force.
No 1. Special Force.
M.O.4.
G. (R).
GSI. (Z).
Special Force 136.
No. 50 Commando.
No. 52 Commando.
Small Raiding Force (sometimes known as 62 Cdo).
5. "Did No. 30 Assault Unit RM (SEAC) have a special insignia?".
6. "Did 29 Bn. RM have a special insignia?".
7. "Did the Landing Craft Obstacle Clearance Units (LCOCU) have any special insignia?".
8. "Did Detachment 385 (specialist canoeists and swimmers) have any special insignia?".

JOHN BAILEY.

ROYAL MARINES

Figure 1



Figure 3

ROYAL MARINES

Figure 2

COMMANDO

Figure 4

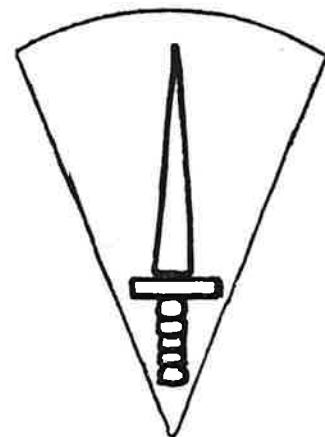


Figure 5

40 **42** **44**

Figure 6

Nº 46

Figure 7

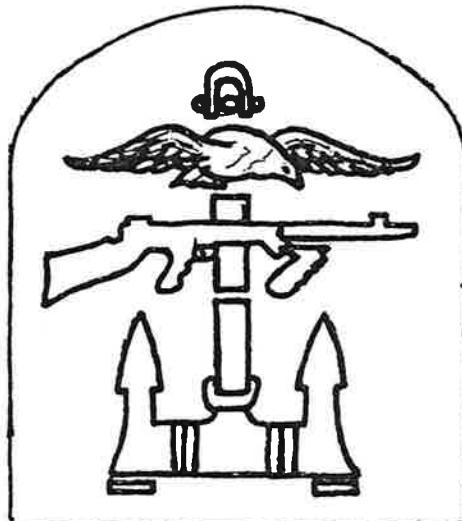


Figure 8



Figure 9

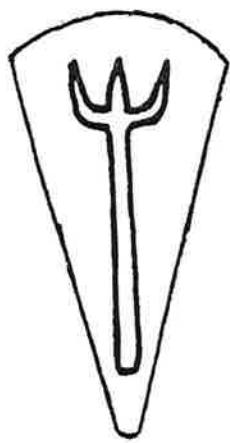


Figure 10

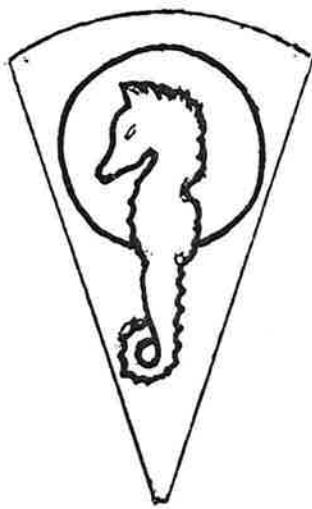


Figure 11

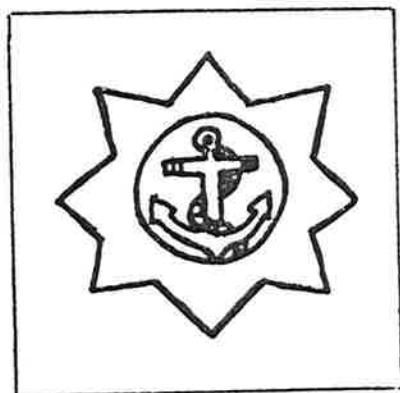


Figure 12



Figure 13

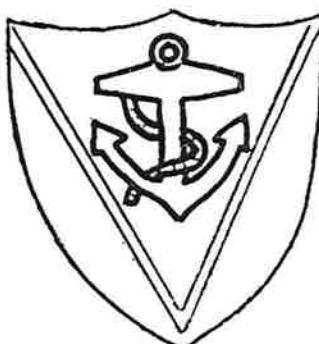


Figure 14



Figure 15



Figure 16



Figure 17

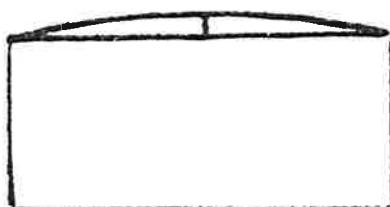


Figure 18

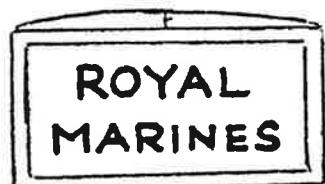


Figure 19

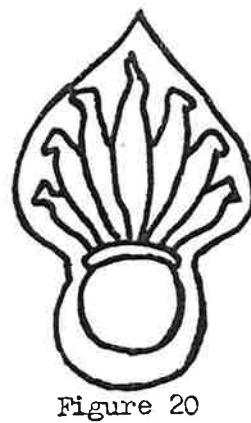


Figure 20

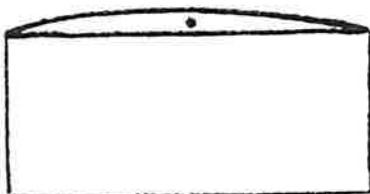


Figure 21



Figure 22



Figure 23



Figure 24



Figure 25



Figure 26



Figure 27



Figure 28

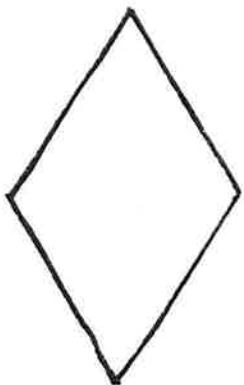


Figure 29



Figure 30