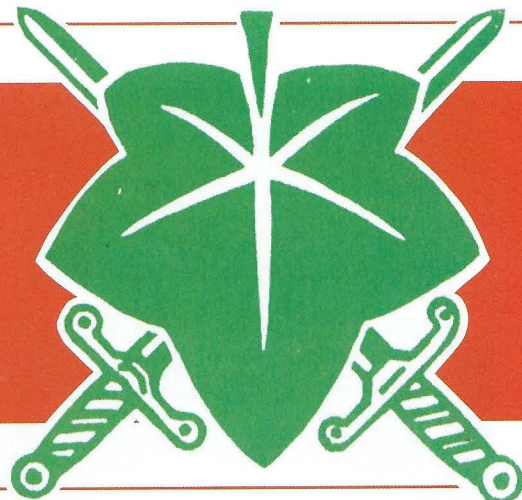


THE FORMATION SIGN

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HQ 12th INFANTRY BRIGADE'S SIGN - INSPIRED BY THE ROYAL NAVAL DIVISION?



One of the lesser known cloth badges of the Second World War writes **Mike Jackson** is that of Headquarters 12th Infantry Brigade. Despite serving with 4th Infantry Division for the entire war - where it should only have worn the divisional sign - the Brigade's HQ wore the distinctive anchor sign shown. First recorded in Britain in September 1941 it is shown below worn on a US War Aid battledress in Italy. In FS 184 **Richard Woods** illustrated an example as worn by 4th Division and speculated that it was probably introduced by Brigadier Daniel Beak VC during his time as Brigade commander from June 1940 to December 1941. This remarkable man suggests Mike, may have introduced the anchor sign for very personal reasons.



Daniel Beak, born in Southampton in 1891, joined the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve as a rating in February 1915 and was commissioned a temporary Sub-Lieutenant in the Royal Naval Division in May. Arriving in France a year later, in March 1917 he was appointed adjutant of the Drake Battalion which as an acting Commander he commanded for three weeks in 1917. He won the Military Cross in January 1917 and a Bar in July 1917, both awarded for leadership under fire. In December 1917 he was appointed CO, Howe Battalion, briefly commanded the Anson Battalion in the first week of March 1918 then transferred back to the Drake Battalion on 13 March 1918. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Order that July.

His Victoria Cross award, gazetted in November 1918 described how in August and September "Commander Beak led his men and captured four enemy positions under heavy fire. Four days later, although dazed by a shell fragment, in the absence of the Brigade commander, he reorganised the whole Brigade under extremely heavy gun fire and led his men to their objective. When an attack was held up, accompanied by only one runner he succeeded in breaking up a nest of machine-guns, personally bringing in nine or ten prisoners. His initiative and the confidence with which he

inspired all ranks, contributed very materially to the success of these operations".

Demobbed in June 1919 Beak later received a Regular commission as a Captain in the Royal Scots Fusiliers and served in Ireland before transferring to the King's Regiment as a Major. Promoted brevet Lieutenant-Colonel in 1935 he transferred to the South Lancashire Regiment in 1938. During World War II Beak was commander 12th Brigade, GOC Malta and 151st Infantry Brigade, which he led during *Operation Pugilist*, the unsuccessful attack on the Mareth Line in North Africa. General Montgomery dismissed him from his post after the battle and he never held another command. He retired in February 1945 as an honorary Major-General. His VC is displayed in the Imperial War Museum's Ashcroft Gallery.