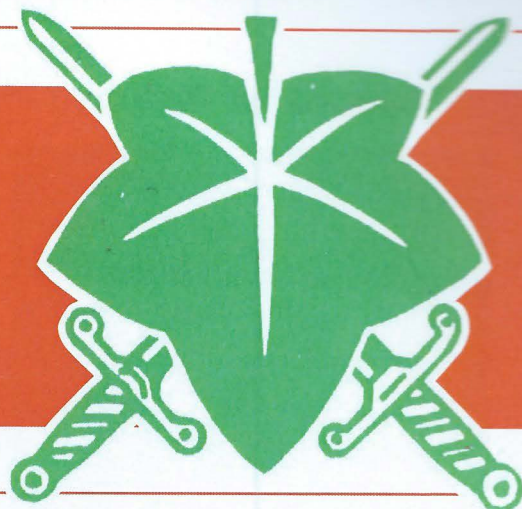


THE FORMATION SIGN

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TRAIL BLAZERS



In our Journal nearly forty years ago **Philip Haythornethwaite** illustrated badges worn by the wartime Civil Defence Reserve. Although pre-war CD plans envisaged that local authorities overwhelmed by enemy action would call on adjoining areas for assistance, this proved less easy to imple-

ment in rural counties and in 1940 Kent evolved a system of mobile ARP parties held at central locations which could be sent to areas in trouble as requested. A similar system was later established in Sussex. As manpower became scarce the Ministry of Home Security asked all regions to establish similar reserves of mobile groups of all major CD services to be known as the Civil Defence Reserve (CDR). Units making up the CDR in each region were known as the Regional Column and identified by arm badges bearing the region's number in Roman numerals. By 1943 fourteen units existed in nine CD regions, the Kent and Sussex Reserves remaining separate.

In FS 102 Philip illustrated arm and beret badges, including some that related to a short-lived, post-war equivalent of Regional Columns. In 1952 as part of the re-formed Civil Defence organisation, the Home Office drew up plans for mobile CD Rescue units which in nuclear war would provide trained support to local CD services and an Experimental Mobile Column (EMC) staffed by volunteers from the Army and RAF was to be formed. Established in January 1953 at a depot at Epsom in Surrey - which came complete with a purpose-built bomb site - the EMC, equipped with 76 vehicles and 14 motorcycles was commanded by Brigadier DAL McKenzie, DSO, MC a former Indian Army officer. During the two years of its existence it worked with every one of Britain's local authority CD services. Although deemed a success the 1955 Defence White Paper announced that nuclear war required a disciplined, military body to act as a link between CD units and



the armed forces in Britain and in 1955 this emerged as the Mobile Defence Corps.

Although all EMC members came from the Army or RAF the EMC wore CD blue battle dress, OR's retaining their rank badges, officers adopting slip-ons displaying their appointment like the Commandant's shown. A new CD-style badge based on the wartime CD pocket badge was worn on beret and breast pocket, a Queen's crown with red centre replacing the wartime crown. A curved label with the Column's full title was worn under breast badge, the initials worn as an arm title. EMC Chief Instructor Captain Oxbury is shown wearing the badges in the photo.



Details of the EMC came from *We Blazed the Trail: CD Experimental Column Epsom, 1953/54* by Robin Reid and Malcolm Bidder. (Woodfield Publishing, 2008). **Steve Taylor's** help with badge illustrations is gratefully acknowledged.