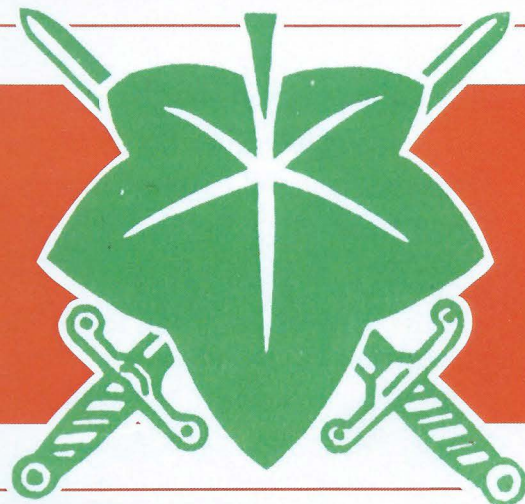


# THE FORMATION SIGN

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## THISTLES IN NORMANDY



In Issue 226 of April 2007 **Robert Le Chantoux** noted an unusual combination of badges recorded in the Imperial War Museum's photograph BU 1474. Taken in Brussels in December 1944 it showed a Gunner wearing the sign of 3rd Anti-Aircraft Division below the sign of 21st Army Group's Lines of Communications. In the earlier article the badge combination was recreated as we could not publish the IWM's photograph but nearly twelve years later we can illustrate the exact combination from the surviving uniform shown here which was sold earlier this year on EBay.

Robert's original article pointed out that 3rd AA Division, raised in Scotland with largely Scottish units had disappeared in 1942 so how did its sign appear on a uniform two years later, apparently worn as a regimental flash? Detailed research through the constituent regiments of the Division led Robert to suggest that the sign was that of 125th LAA Regiment, formed in 1942 from 56th Searchlight Regiment which did serve with 21st Army Group, initially as part of the defences of the Mulberry Harbour in Normandy.



This theory may now have to be revised as items sold with the battle dress prove it belonged to Lieutenant George Christie who, in August 1939 enlisted as a Gunner with 291 Battery, 94th AA Regiment in Edinburgh. The 94th did serve with 3 AA Division but were not in France in 1944. George was commissioned in 1942 and the photo sold with the uniform seen here shows LAA gunners on the Mulberry Harbour. Convinced that Robert was on the right track with 125th LAA Regiment, the Editor obtained a copy of that regiment's War Diary held in the National Archives at Kew which contains regular returns of the officer's serving with the regiment – but Lieutenant Christie does not appear as an officer of the 125th during the relevant period.

Of four other LAA Regiments which Robert established had first served with 3rd AA Division – the 31st, 32nd, 40th and 67th – only the 32nd ended up in Normandy, two of the others serving in the Middle East the third never leaving Britain. The Editor is now following up this lead so fingers crossed for a positive result as it would be nice to cross another item off the list of unidentified badges we all have. Now what about finally identifying this Gunner sign?

