

# THE FORMATION SIGN

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## NEW BADGE - OLD BADGE

The Garrison Sergeant Major, London District now has a new arm badge unique to his position. Our member **Gary Gibbs** takes up the story...

"In 2009, as a member of the staff of the Guards Museum, I wrote a paper to the Major General Commanding, London District proposing a new badge of rank for the Garrison Sergeant Major, the Guards Division's senior Warrant Officer, to consist of the large Royal Coat of Arms superimposed on a four bar chevron. There was an historical precedent for this, as before 1882 all Guards Sergeant Major's wore the large Royal Coat of Arms on a four bar chevron on both arms.

At that time the Guards Division was one of the only units in the British Army whose senior WOI was not distinguished in some way. By this time all the senior WOIs of Corps etc were distinguished by a special badge, the small Royal Coat of Arms in a wreath, worn on the lower arms. The Royal Artillery Sergeant Major, Academy Sergeant Major, Sandhurst\* and Conductors, Royal Logistic Corps wear an arm rank badge specific to their position.

The proposal circulated around Horse Guards for some time until final agreement was reached. In February 2011 the badge was sewn onto a four bar chevron and submitted to the Army Dress Committee which approved it with the proviso that both the Royal College of Arms (who had to produce a drawing) and



Her Majesty The Queen (who signed the drawing off) also approved. As a result, on the day of the wedding of Prince William to Catherine Middleton,

WOI WDG 'Billy' Mott OBE, Welsh Guards, Garrison Sergeant Major, London District (seen here) wore the badge for the first time on his scarlet Home Service Tunic.

The Garrison Sergeant Major will wear this configuration of badges in all orders of dress. It was first thought that the Drum Major's four bar chevron could be used, but the gold one was not quite the right shape, so the master tailor made a new one, which is also being done for No 1 Dress and Mess Dress. The Service Dress chevrons for Drum Majors did not work either, the lace being too narrow and too pointed, so new, larger-laced ones are being produced. An innovation is that for Greatcoat Order a larger Royal Coat of Arms in dull red on dark navy blue is being made to be worn on a four bar chevron on the upper arm. (At the time of writing this is still being developed so could be prone to minor change.) Thus history has been changed in the Guards Division."

(Garrison Sergeant Majors, appointed to military districts since the mid-nineteenth century, have become increasingly prominent in London District because of the many ceremonial occasions held there. GSM George Stone, Irish Guards, appointed in 1952, was first to be called Garrison Sergeant Major, London District. Ed)

\* See pages 467/468 in *British Army Badges* by Lt Col Robin Hodges.