

# THE FORMATION SIGN

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## IT'S THREE COMMANDO - ISN'T IT?

This unusual photograph was recently posted on the website of the British Military Badge Forum by **Lee Cundick** in the hope that someone might be able to identify the badge and its meaning. It was quickly spotted by Commando collector and society member **Mike Beckett** who had seen an identical badge in a Bosley's auction some time ago. Listed as possibly 3 Commando with the design signifying 3 / Cdo / Special / Service, Mike thought it a worthwhile investment in the hope that it might turn out to be related to No 3.

The 3 Commando identification is however problematic. No 3,

formed in July 1940, served in Gibraltar, North Africa, Sicily and Italy before returning to Britain in November 1943 for the D Day landings, subsequently serving in Europe where they were disbanded. The soldier in the photograph is wearing khaki drill which he would have worn in these areas but on his chest he has the ribbon of what would at that period have been the 1939-1943 Star. First mentioned in ACI1690 of 18th November 1943 with the qualification that 'no authority can be give for the issue of this star' it seems unlikely that a member of 3 Commando would have been wearing the ribbon in November 1943. An alternative possibility is that this is the badge of 3 Special Service Brigade which, composed of 1, 5, 42 and 44 (RM) Commandos, was formed for operations in south-east Asia, ending up in Hong Kong at the end of the war where Nos 1 and 5 Commandos (the latter having crossed daggers in their cap badge) were disbanded. Badges of similar manufacture are often found for units which passed through India and the use of SS for Special Service, a designation which was replaced in December 1944 by Commando suggests an earlier date of manufacture. That this is a Commando badge seems to be confirmed by the Commando Association plaque from the same source with the badge painted on it. Can anyone add anything to the Editor's musings on this rare item?

