

A FAVOURITE BADGE FROM MY COLLECTION: RAF RECRUITER PENSIONER

by John Murdoch

Nobbs & Thomas¹ described this badge as a Pensioner Recruiter badge, worn on the right arm. It is difficult to determine whether the intertwined letters on the badge represent PR or RP, but it is in fact RP and the badge is correctly described as “Recruiter Pensioner”. It helps me to remember the correct word order by thinking that a Pensioner Recruiter could describe someone who recruits pensioners, which was not at all the purpose of this appointment. The rare photograph below also shows that the badge was worn below the elbow on both arms.

In the period following the announcement of Britain’s extensive re-armament plans in the mid 1930’s, there was a large flow of recruits into the Royal Air Force for both skilled and other trades. This required a rapid expansion of the RAF recruiting service, which was supplemented by the deployment of retired RAF regulars. As confirmed by the photograph, these Recruiter Pensioners wore uniforms, but without any distinguishing badges or rank insignia. The recruiter in the photograph is wearing shoulder eagles and appears to have an RAF LS&GC medal ribbon after his WW1 ribbons, which suggests that he may have been a



RAF Recruiter Pensioner sleeve badge in light blue on very dark blue/black thick wool patch.

retired senior NCO or Warrant Officer. He is also wearing an appropriate armband, although it is not possible to determine any wording or lettering. Retired officers in civil service grades are still involved in recruiting and liaison with educational establishments, but they no longer wear uniform. The RP badge is unlikely to have continued into the post-war era.



Pensioner Recruiter supervising recruits taking the education test at Victory House, London in March 1936.

1. Margaret Nobbs & A C Thomas, *An Illustrated and Descriptive Catalogue of Royal Air Force Insignia* (undated)