

NEW BADGE – OLD BADGE

by Gary Gibbs



A close up of the badge

The Garrison Sergeant Major, London District now has a new arm badge, unique to his position. In 2009 I wrote a paper as a member of the Guards Museum staff to the Major General Commanding London district. The content of this paper was a proposal for a new badge of rank for the Guards senior Warrant Officer. This was to consist of the large Royal Coat of Arms on a four bar chevron. There was a historical precedence for this, as before 1882 all Guards Sergeant Major's wore the large Royal Coat of Arms on a four bar chevron, albeit on both arms,

By this time all the senior WO1s 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, RLC Conductors all wear a rank arm badge specifically to their position. The Guards Division was one of the only units of the British Army where their senior WO1 was not distinguished in some way.

This proposal was pushed around Horse Guards for some time until everyone there was in agreement for the badge to go ahead. In February 2011 the badge was sewn onto a four bar chevron for approval by the Army Dress Committee. The Committee gave their approval on the proviso that it was approved by both the Royal College of Arms (who had to produce a drawing) and Her Majesty The Queen (who signed the drawing off). The result was that on the day of the wedding of Prince William to Catherine Middleton, the Garrison Sergeant Major, London District 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 up, this 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 and so new larger laced ones are being produced. One new innovation is that in Greatcoat Order a larger dull red on dark navy blue large Royal Coat of Arms is being made for a four bar chevron to be worn on the upper arm. (At the time of writing this is still in the development stage so could be prone to minor change.)

So history has been changed in the Guards Division.



The master tailor sewing the large Royal Coat of Arms onto the Garrison Sergeant Major's tunic



Garrison Sergeant Major Billy Mott wearing the new badge on his Home Service Tunic