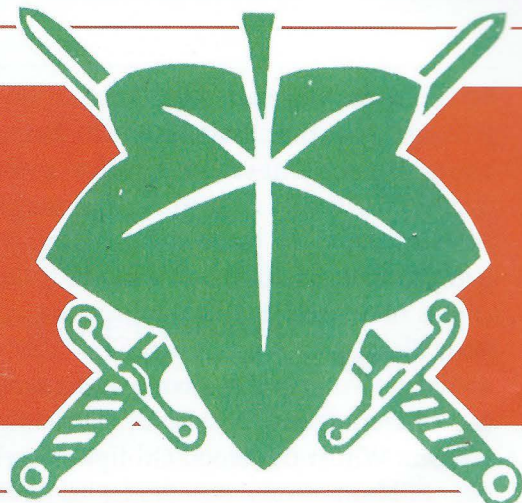


THE FORMATION SIGN

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ZAPPED



Nearly all the units of the British army in Afghanistan writes **Gary Gibbs** are now wearing a new type of badge which seems to be taking over from the more conventional Tactical Recognition Flash or TRF. Even the US Army is getting in on the act. Known as Zap Badges they are made for the individual soldier and are consequently likely to be hard to come by; Gary has not yet seen any come onto the market. Zap badges combine a unit or country badge with blood group, rank, initials and personal number. The badges are 100mm long by 50 mm high and all have a merrowed edge and a Velcro backing.

They come on several coloured backings including sand, olive green, MTP camouflage and black with the lettering in white, black, brown and black. A new innovation just appearing is that the white stitching on green and black badges is luminous to help medics in the dark. It stores daylight and glows green at night. Some of the colours are full, proper colours whilst others are subdued ie the Union flag can be in full colours or different shades of brown and green.



(The range of these is quite wide. The website www.military-badges.co.uk/ZAP-BADGES.htm illustrates nearly forty different examples ranging from a "Basic Zap" with no badge priced at £2.99. Those with badge designs cost an extra pound. Three different designs are available for the RAF, the RAF Regiment and for 1301 Flight which features a Chinook. The range is likely to increase as the site says "Please do not hesitate to contact us to have your unit badge design made". Has anyone told the Army Dress Committee? Ed)