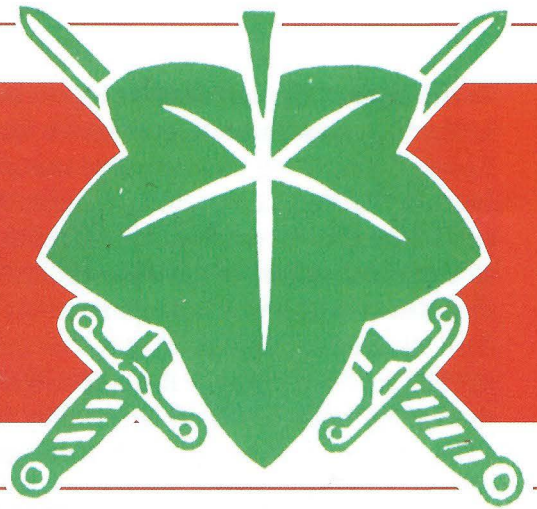
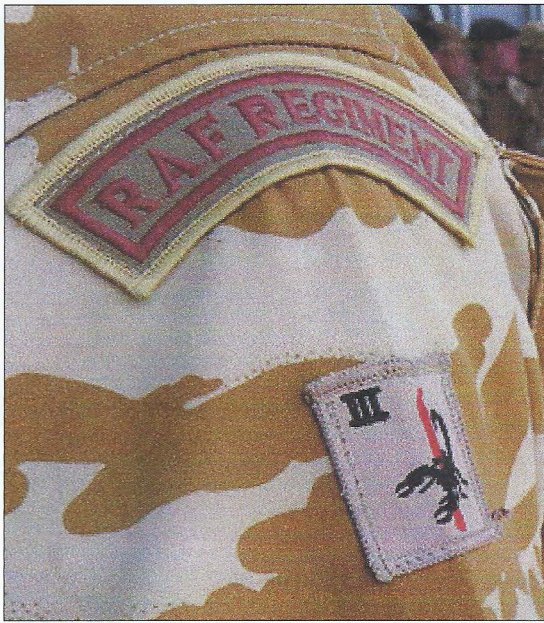


THE FORMATION SIGN

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“THROUGH ADVERSITY” – SEVENTY-ONE YEARS OF THE RAF REGIMENT



During the 1930s responsibility for the defence of airfields against low-level attacks passed from the army to the RAF which in 1939 began Lewis gun training for its aircraft hands; by the outbreak of war over 400 RAF stations had each received eight guns as their defence against air attack. When the campaign in France in 1940 demonstrated the need for defence against air and ground attack, the army assumed responsibility for the latter, putting a severe strain on its manpower. In May 1940 a newly-established RAF Directorate of Ground Defence obtained approval to train 100 airmen on every flying station in ground defence duties. By the end of 1940 129,000 men were wearing a “Ground Gunner” trade badge.

When the Directorate suggested forming a ground defence corps along the lines of the Royal Marines, the senior officer Army provided as Inspector of Ground Defences reorganised ground defence airmen in January 1941 into Nos 710 to 850 Squadrons, RAF. The German airborne assault on Crete in May

1941 led to a call for a “specialist corps of airfield defence troops” trained, organised and administered by the army. By that November this had become a proposal to form a “Royal Air Force Aerodrome Defence Corps” under Air Ministry control. When the War Office agreed to the proposal in December it offered support to organise and train the new corps which was formed as the Royal Air Force Regiment on 1st February 1942.



Blue-grey service dress was retained as a best uniform with khaki battledress issued as a practical working dress. Curved “RAF Regiment” arm titles were worn above the RAF shoulder eagle, an interesting dress distinction at a time when the Army was doing its best to ensure that similar unofficial regimental designations were not worn. The red on khaki version was issued for khaki drill uniforms. In the various styles shown overleaf this title has been the mark of the Regiment since its formation. Other badges were those worn on service dress.