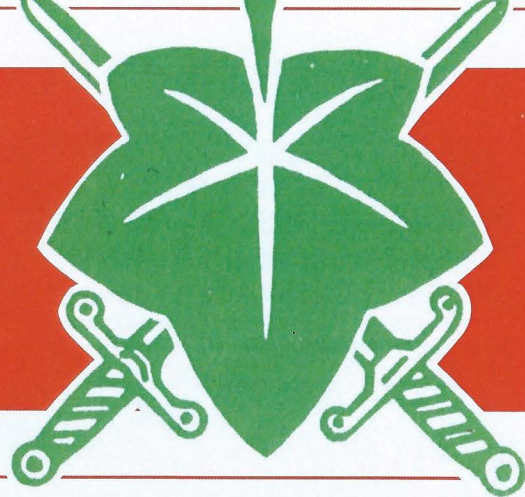


# THE FORMATION SIGN

JOURNAL OF THE MILITARY HERALDRY SOCIETY



## A Hundred and One Up!

This year marks the 101st birthday of the Royal Corps of Signals, formed in June 1920 from the Royal Engineer Signal Service, itself established a few years earlier. When war broke out in 1914 some 6,000 soldiers were serving with the Service's 12 Regular companies supported by a Special Reserve motorcyclist section and 29 Territorial Force Signal Companies. By the end of the First World War some 70,000 signallers were serving in 589 companies - the majority supporting the BEF in France and Flanders - with a further 65 units in Palestine and Egypt, 42 in Macedonia and Greece, 17 in Italy and 24 in Mesopotamia. Responsible for all forms of signalling - visual, telegraph, telephone, signal despatch, wireless communications from HQ down to Brigades and artillery communications down to Batteries, the primary methods of communication were visual and telegraph with despatch relying on runners, horses or motorcycles.

The Service's distinctive feature was the Armlet, Blue/White, Signal Service introduced in May 1915, which the Pimlico Clothing Factory pattern register describes as First Pattern, a further entry in August 1917 introducing another Armlet, Blue and White Signal service. Does anyone know what difference - if any - there was between the two? The pictures show the armlet worn, the first apparently sewn to the arm under the Corporal's stripes, the second - from the austerity tunic and soft cap probably taken later than the first - with a cloth Signal Service title. In November 1916 the brass T/Signal Service titles of Territorial units was replaced by Titles, Embroidered SD, Cloth, Drab, Melton, Thick - T Signal Service like the example shown.

