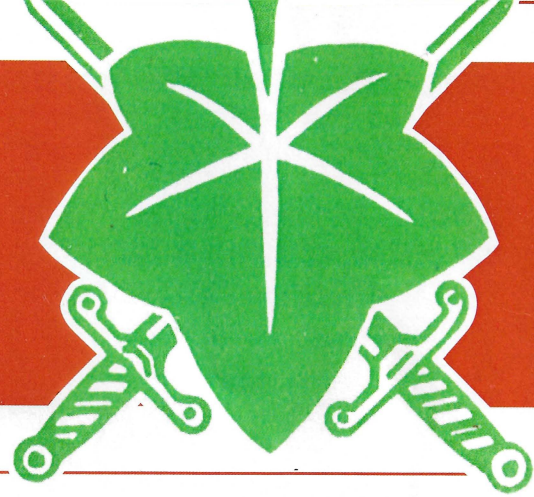


THE FORMATION SIGN

JOURNAL OF THE MILITARY HERALDRY SOCIETY



He's a Beachley Boy!



Thanks to two Society members we can now positively identify the uniform of this young soldier as that of an Apprentice Regimental Sergeant Major serving with an Army Technical School, in this case that at Beachley Barracks, Chepstow.

In 1915 the government requisitioned land in Gloucestershire where the rivers Wye and Severn converge to construct National Shipyard No.2 but the First World War ended before production began. In 1924 the newly formed Army Technical School arrived from Aldershot, training young apprentices for three years before they joined the Regular Army as highly skilled men, providing qualified soldiers with technical and military training as potential NCOs and officers for the specialist corps. Renamed an Army Apprentices College in 1966, Beachley remained an Apprentice Training Establishment until 1994 when the Army decided it no longer required Boy Soldiers. Home since 2007 to 1st Battalion The Rifles, Beachley is to close by 2029.

Former Apprentices **Les Cable** and **Frank Stevens** identified the photo and provided details of the badges worn on the inter-war service dress. Les wrote "As an Apprentice Tradesman (A/T) at the Army Technical School (Boys) Arborfield in 1945, I wore that exact uniform less puttees, our cap badge the Royal Arms of the General Service Corps. The A/T RSM, known as The Boy RSM, wore the cap badge (with loops E & W) superimposed on three black felt chevrons on red felt like that shown,, Boy CSM's the Crown in Laurel Wreath on the chevrons. Certificate A badges weren't worn". Les did not recall wearing puttees at Arborfield but his brother Austin, at Beachley from February 1943, remembers them being worn and has found photos showing them on the college website at: <https://armyapprenticecollegechestow.co.uk>



Initially known as the Boy's Technical School, a brass BTS title was later replaced by AT'S. A cloth version of the latter introduced for battle dress was superseded by a coloured printed title when they were introduced for the entire Army in 1943.

