

# INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME 4

This is the fourth and final (planned!) Volume of the Warpaint series, and this volume commences with describing the various different ground and/or air recognition systems, mostly employed in an attempt to prevent fratricide, the so-called blue-on-blue. Next, comes a commentary on the use of vehicle names, and whilst the descriptive, textual, part of the topic proved relatively straightforward, the sheer amount of information that might be printed turned out to be staggering. It was therefore decided that a modern solution to the problem would solve it – the tables detailing the many thousands of identified individual names will not be found between these covers, but can be accessed (and thus updated) via the MMP website. The final chapter covers – hopefully – the vast majority of the other things that could be found on vehicles by way of markings, and also looks at other FAQs such as tools, fire extinguishers, flags and the like. Never was a Miscellaneous section in a book more aptly described!

In the Introduction to Volume One I wrote that my aim in writing this series of books came about because I tried to find a book that covered all aspects of British camouflage and markings only to discover that it didn't exist. Once the research started in earnest, it rapidly became clear that the amount of information was going to be so large that it was impossible to put it all into a single volume, both for reasons of size and cost. And then another decision had to be made, as to whether it should deal with topics chronologically or thematically. The latter was chosen and as I reflect on the way that the series has been delivered, I remain convinced that the decision was the correct one. Of course it is true that one needs all four Volumes in order to make sense of the plethora of schemes and marking potentially found on any given vehicle, but for ease of reference and also to understand WHY systems developed as they did, the thematic route was the only sensible option.

Did I achieve my aim? Well, mostly yes. There will always be dissenters who disagree with a particular conclusion I have reached, but that is healthy, and all the Volumes should do is to provide a start point for one's own interest in the topic and individual research. I have constantly tried to make it clear where I am offering an opinion as opposed to fact, which I feel is a particular strong point. I am also encouraged by the majority of the comments received, overwhelmingly positive, and where criticism has been forwarded, has mostly been done in a constructive manner, rather than nit-picking for the sake of it.

I believe that another statement I made earlier in the series is worthy of repetition: The sheer size of the topic limited me. What I have attempted to do is to describe in the appropriate detail the policies and actual use of British vehicle markings in the period under review. This necessitates concentrating on the common and the regulated at the expense of the rare and unusual, although I have always tried to strike a balance between the two. In many cases I have discussed individual vehicles, but if I have omitted to mention that in 1956, for a period of three days, one Territorial Company of the Royal Mess-Tin Repair Battalion painted their vehicles yellow to assist in a Boy Scout display in Chipping Sodbury, then once again, I apologise!

And finally a huge thank you; to all my collaborators who have contributed to the information found herein, and also to Roger and Robert at MMP for their support and advice throughout the project. Time now to concentrate on *The Men Inside The Metal!*

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The blue pennant(s) was not flown all the time by B vehicles; orders issued in September 1942 stated that it was to be mounted on a pole and carried within the driver's cab, being waved as both a challenge and as the response. Broken-down vehicles indicated this at a distance by the driver holding the flag in his right hand, and his headdress in his left, both horizontal.

The 7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Division in Egypt in May 1940 ordered that "Each AFV will carry two pennants to be flown on the wireless mast in positions ordered as signal of the day...All AFVs whether carrying wireless or not will mount a wireless mast." In some cases the pennants flown were rectangular, 18" long and 4" high, coloured Red, White and Blue. One was flown above the other, about 24" apart.

In late 1941, 7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Brigade in the Western Desert issued the following note:

*All armoured vehicles which have wireless masts will wear pennants in the position of the day. Tanks wear a red-and-white sign, but some newly arrived may not have them painted on. Armoured cars have no colour sign, but they show they are friendly by holding a flag out on their right.*

This instruction contains a number of interesting points. Not all armoured vehicles were equipped with wireless, and "wireless masts" here refers to what are now known as radio antennas. The red-and-white sign (meaning the original White-Red-White flash) was evidently not universal on tanks, and was not – officially at least – worn on armoured cars – see below. Those armoured cars not equipped with radio would have to resort to holding out a flag, the colour and shape of which was not specified, so would presumably also be daily changing. Photographs of armoured cars and scout cars of the period do frequently show flags being flown from the right side of the vehicle.

Recognition pennants were still being used in Italy as late as mid-1944, with the final known set of surviving instructions giving details for the period 16<sup>th</sup> May to 12<sup>th</sup> June 1944, but in May 1944 it had been ordered that the use of recognition pennants was to be discontinued in the Mediterranean theatre, so this order may represent the final instruction of the kind.



*A Light Tank in the Western Desert carrying no less than four pennants. This almost certainly signifies a unit navigator's vehicle - see Chapter 3. (TM 208/A/6)*





*SNEEZY of 8<sup>th</sup> Armoured Brigade Workshops; the other six of the Dwarves are probably nearby!*

*This RA OP Sherman of an unidentified unit has the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battery marking, and the driver is chalking a very unofficial name for the sake of the cameraman – note the unidentified marking on the turret face, just visible above the barrel. (IWM H37995*





*A variation on a theme – the stenciling reads*

*THIS VEHICLE IS FILLED WITH ANTIFREEZE  
BLUE 1-2 PARTS AND MUST NOT BE DRAINED*

*(IWM H 19482)*

*Left: ANTI-FREEZE MIXTURE DO NOT DRAIN.*

*Bottom, left: Churchill CS with both Turret Key and Anti-Freeze stencils. (TM 357/70)*

*Bottom right: Many miscellaneous instructions were not required to be seen from a distance, and therefore were only one inch or so high and*

*so are often difficult to spot in photographs. This Universal Carriers of this Czech unit in UK around 1942 have the SLING HERE (or possibly LIFT HERE) instructions stencilled next to the front lifting eyes - the same is almost certainly the case at the rear. Note the gas detector paint on the front. (B. Kudlička coll.)*

**TURRET KEY HERE**

**SLING HERE**



*Trials and sales organisations have often used (got away with) esoteric camouflage schemes and the tiger-stripes on this ATDU-operated Challenger 1 at Lulworth in the mid-1980s is no exception. She is carrying the early ATDU tank insignia and the Special Projects registration number 06SP40. The large square red gummy flag shows that the turret is at a state of 'Action', and therefore she may be about to use the laser rangefinder, or indeed to fire her weapon systems.*



*The armoured force for the entry into Kosovo in 1999 was supplied by the King's Royal Hussars, and Challenger 1 79KF04 shown here was used by the Troop Leader of 2nd Troop, A Squadron. She is shown as she was on arrival in Macedonia (FYROM) in early 1999, in the standard BAOR scheme of black over NATO green, and before the KFOR recognition signs or the appliqué armour packs were applied.*

