



Headquarters
New Zealand Defence Force
Defence House
Private Bag 39997
Wellington Mail Centre
Lower Hutt 5045
New Zealand

OIA-2023-4822

 September 2023



Dear 

I refer to your request of 9 September 2023 seeking, under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), the following information concerning the New Zealand Army Badge:

all information pertaining to the Royal New Zealand Air Force badge found on page 57 of the NZDF Visual Identity Standards 2022; ie who designed it, what each symbol means etc, and relevant dates.

Following the Chief of Air Force's agreement to a proposed badge, heraldic advice is sought. Once this advice has been obtained and any suggested changes have been approved a painting of the badge will be commissioned by Air Staff. The painting will then be forwarded to His/Her Majesty's College of Arms, London, where a duplicate painting will be prepared for the Sovereign's approval. Following approval by the Sovereign, the official badge painting will be forwarded to the Royal New Zealand Air Force Museum for permanent safekeeping.

Information regarding the Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF) Badge is provided below.

Description In front of a circle inscribed Royal New Zealand Air Force and ensigned with the Imperial Crown an eagle volant affronte, the head lowered and to the sinister. Beneath the whole upon a scroll the motto. The words 'dexter' and 'sinister' are Latin for right and left respectively. Thus, the eagle is looking to its left.

Motto PER ARDUA AD ASTRA (*Through struggle to the stars*).

The original RNZAF English translation of the Motto "Through steep and toilsome ways to the stars" was amended in 2022 to "Through Struggle to the Stars" to reflect the translation in common use by members of the RNZAF.



His Majesty King George V approved PER ARDUA AD ASTRA as the official motto for the Royal Flying Corps on 15 March 1913, and it was promulgated in Army Order No. 3 in the following April without a meaning. Before, and for more than twenty years after that date, efforts were made to establish a literal translation. 'Through Struggle to the Stars' and 'Through Difficulties to the Skies' were two versions of the motto. The Air Ministry in a final effort to establish a translation appealed to the College of Arms, but that high authority could only confirm: 'No authoritative translation is possible'. To which the then Air Council Member for Personnel wrote a postscript: 'Let everyone translate it as they think fit'.

Reason for Design This badge is an adaptation of the RAF badge, the chief difference being that the motto appears on the RNZAF badge on the scroll. The badge was accepted by Air Headquarters New Zealand on 10 August 1943 and afterwards approved by His Majesty King George VI.

Date Approved January 1944.

Additional Information The Tudor Crown was replaced by the St Edward's Crown in November 1955.

Should you require any further information, please contact the Air Force Museum at research@airforcemuseum.co.nz

You have the right, under section 28(3) of the OIA, to ask an Ombudsman to review this response to your request. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that responses to official information requests are proactively released where possible. This response to your request will be published shortly on the NZDF website, with your personal information removed.

Yours sincerely

AJ WOODS

Air Commodore

Chief of Staff HQNZDF