

1938/39

SYMBOL: A Maltese cross at lower centre.

COLOURS: White on bright (Brunswick) green.

Yet another illustriously more inspirational emblem enriched this series. Although for all posterity it has been portrayed as a Maltese cross, its outline in effect is a far cry from the motif ordinarily regarded as characteristic of the Knights Templar. It really is more reminiscent of a filled-in Celtic cross.

Passenger - 222,500 pairs were shoved into service where the prime 2,000 were siphoned off by Rental & Private Hire.



Motorcycle



.1 to 24,500

Large Vehicle Dealer



D.1 to D2.200

Motorcycle Dealer - The welcome mat was laid out for 200 sets.

Exempt



E.1 to E5.100

Government



Govt. 1 to Govt3.700

heavy Vehicle



H.1 to H23.200

Light Vehicle



L. 1 to L29.500

Bus - 750 pairs were put up for grabs.

Service Vehicle



S.1 to S.850

Taxi



T.1 to T2.500

Rental & Private Hire - Having up to now always toiled as team-mates who had shrewdly split up between them the proceeds stemming from the choicest snippets of the passenger allocation (here serials **1** to **2,000**), this was to be their last fling together before galloping off into the sunset and, as of next year, searching for new but independent adventures.

Trailer



R.1 to R9.900

Contract Vehicle



V.1 to V1.900

Territorial Army - During 1938, and until at least 1940, Precision was roused to dispense moderate sums of plates for issuance to soldiers in the Territorial Army for interim mounting on their private vehicles while on military training. Even though these had no serials (only the word **TERRITORIAL** in glowing orange on a black base was discernable) every single sample was inscribed with a unique number amidships at the top comprising tiny digits. In this way it would be practicable to maintain a register of the persons to whom a set had been temporarily loaned who could then, once instructions had terminated, be approached to guarantee the articles were retrieved. Curiously none of the registrations were embossed, supposedly to save on costs, but had the eleven letters glued on comparable to a modern-day transfer. The results however looked pretty slick.

The plates came in both passenger and motorcycle-sized options but, because all were meant to be recouped after their ephemeral use, the chances these days of experiencing a close encounter of any kind with a remnant is akin to witnessing an unidentified flying kiwi. But as providence would have it, some celestial force in the galaxy has seen to it that two (perhaps even three) of the larger versions and a sole smaller one have mysteriously made it through the intervening time warp. The one at



left is numbered 503 and was paired to 504, both of them staunchly entrenched in personal collections. The third possible holder of the other (with whom meantime contact has been lost) used to be a trooper with the Nelson Marlborough Rifles which was later renamed the 10th Armoured Fighting Vehicle Nelson/Marlborough/West Coast Infantry. Neither is there anything to enlighten us about the current whereabouts of the motorcycle renegade (which is engraved with a 2) except it has been rumoured it may have found asylum in a private museum somewhere in the South Island.

As a postscript it can be added that the financial reimbursement extracted from the army for utilising one's own conveyance amounted to 12 shillings a day and an ancillary 3 pence a mile for cars and 5 shillings daily plus 1 penny per mile in the case of motorcycles.

Also, shortly after the outbreak of World War II, the armed forces were instilled with the power to commandeer from the rank and file population any contrivance of their choosing, but were first compelled to pay the owner its full market value. Moreover that same individual then retained the right to buy the appliance back for the equivalent price at a later date, if and when it was no longer required by the military.

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