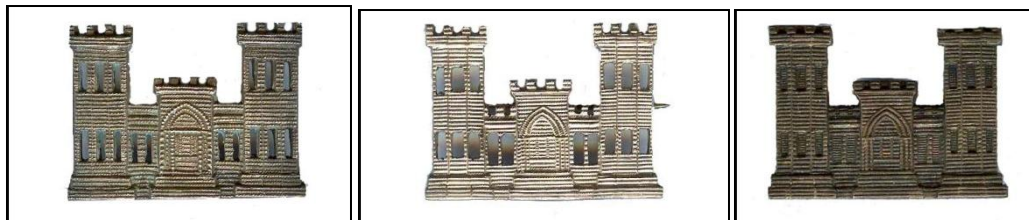


## Some 20th Century Engineer Officer Branch Insignia

The familiar Corps of Engineers castle insignia was evidently first prescribed as a distinctive branch device in 1839 for engineer officers' caps and a larger castle design appeared on US Military Academy cadet caps in 1842. Silver castles continued to be used as engineer insignia on caps and epaulettes during most of the remaining 19th century. Biographical examples from the Civil War are shown below, including in the center, one of the distinctive Corps of Engineer buttons.



When US Army officers began to wear the 1893 sack coat that lasted until the early 1930s, branch insignia started to be affixed to the collar. From 1893 until early 1924, for dress wear engineer officers used silver collar insignia, a continuation of the color used for many years. Initially these collar insignia were embroidered on the collar, but soon metal devices began to appear, including some in imitation embroidery. A few of these are shown below in actual size. While the photos are on a white background, the pierced or open windows of the first two castles, show dark, while the last insignia has windows that are simply solid but indented.



Until 1916 20th century Corps of Engineers enlisted troops were organized only into three battalions although the companies were designated as if they were in a regiment (Companies A through M, less J). Accordingly, while regimental officers of the combatant arms had several



staff positions, and battalions also had an adjutant, within the Corps of Engineers, each battalion had a battalion adjutant and a battalion quartermaster. For dress and semidress coats, between 1900 and 1923, these officers wore small staff devices above the center turret. Two examples that were in the J.

Duncan Campbell collection until 2009 are shown above.



Obviously the two staff officer insignia shown above left were made in non imitation embroidery, as were most of the post 1902 branch

devices. Many silver Corps of Engineer collar insignia exist and a few samples are illustrated in actual size. Some have cut-out windows while others do not. The 104th Engineer Regiment was part of the 29th Division.



For the field uniforms, soldiers wore insignia that today would be called subdued, but at the time were known as bronze. Like the silver versions these come with a wide range of designs for the doors, windows, turrets, and similar features. Bronze Corps of Engineer insignia are the most common of the pre World War II insignia because of their wide use during World War I and the fact that dress uniforms saw virtually no use between 1916 and 1936, although gilt castles appeared in February 1924, replacing the bronze. In the above row the left castle has the center turret windows and the windows to each side of the door cut out while the 3d castle has all three windows in each floor of both turrets cut out. The 2d from left insignia has no design details cut out, including the turret top crenellations. By contrast the 3d from left has the crenellations on all three battlements clearly cut out, and that piece is struck to resemble embroidery. The right most castle has two very narrow crenellations on the two tall turrets but otherwise is of a plain design with no lower windows and a smaller door. This piece was made in France during World War I for AEF officers, which perhaps accounts for its look as a fortress.

Other World War I period insignia are on the next page. These include a castle in imitation embroidery style and all windows cut out with the letters CIC struck as part of the basic castle.



Initially it was mistakenly identified as for a combat information center, a World War II concept. Dick Graney properly identified the letters as ICC and it was the insignia for the 101st Engineer Regiment. Originally known as the First Corps of Cadets when it was formed in 1741, like many militia units it went through many designation and organizational changes, and was called the Independent Corps of Cadets

by 1916. Converted to an engineer unit it became the 26th Division's engineer regiment and was then redesignated the 101st Engineer Regiment. Shown right is a battalion quartermaster officer's insignia in bronze.



One of the scarcest staff insignia is that for the inspector of small arms practice. Although the office had been around since the 1880s, it was 1914 before officers assigned to that duty received a staff device, that of the Ordnance Department's flaming grenade. Like other Corps of Engineer staff pieces, the device went above the castle's center turret. The example shown at the left, with unusual flames on each side that resemble ears, was in the J. Duncan Campbell collection until June 2009.

Other popular insignia worn on shirt collars, especially during World War I, were smaller insignia. Three examples of various sizes and designs and of the same scale as other insignia shown are illustrated right. A World War I shirt size variety with regimental number that was part of the 89th Division is below the other shirt insignia.



Some officers wore embroidered devices on collars. In the AEF these were often done in brown embroidery that went on tailor made uniforms. A US made, gilt embroidered insignia for the 23d Regiment, a highway regiment that was organized at Camp Meade, Maryland, in January 1918 and that stayed in Maryland, is depicted. Since the number is embroidered in brown rather than gilt that would match the castle, the insignia is probably a stock piece from a Baltimore dealer who added the regimental number as needed.



In February 1924 metal insignia and buttons changed to gilt from bronze. With this universal change the Corps of Engineers finally went to gold colored castles rather than the historic silver. History repeated itself and the yellow metal insignia came in imitation embroidery, both with and without numbers, as well as castles with a wide range of pierced, solid, and finally, painted windows, all with a wide range of crenellations. These came in the proper size for standing coat collars, for shirts, and during the 1930s, for the lapel coat.



To the left are three examples of high collar post 1924 insignia, showing various numbers placement. All were made in the imitation embroidery style. Shown below are two

examples for the same 102d Regiment, but with the numbers in different sizes. Like the 2d and 101st castles above, the shirt pieces are in imitation embroidered. Another small shirt false embroidered piece but with the windows and turret crenellations painted black, is left.



Below is a collection of World War II to the present Corps of Engineers castles with unit numbers.

