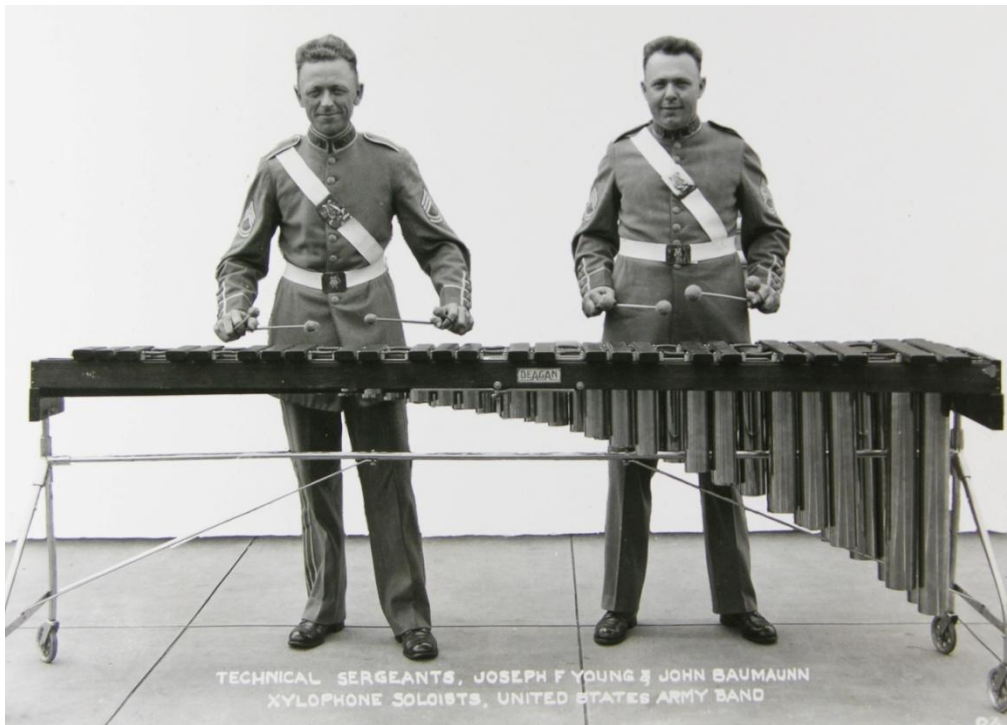


## The U.S. Army Band

John J. Pershing became the U. S. Army Chief of Staff in 1921 and directed the army form a band to represent the entire army. The organization became The U. S. Army Band that still exists today. Initially members wore standard OD uniforms but soon for parade and concert occasions, received special gray uniforms with blue and white trim, as well as unique insignia. These U. S. Army Band members (left) from between the world wars wear cadet gray dress uniforms.

The large breast plate on the single white chest strap is 3-1/2 inches high and is shown on the next page. The central design was the same as the initial cap insignia.

The first cap insignia, used until 1927, was a stamped brass lyre 2.40 inches high that had superimposed in the center, a small eagle taken from the Great Seal and placed in a ring 15/16 inch in diameter. This went on a cadet gray dress uniform cap with dark blue and white trim



and a black bill. The band's first unique dress cap insignia is shown at the right, below.

The band leader complained that the cap insignia was difficult to keep shiny and as a result band members went to a 1-1/2 inches diameter eagle on a circular background. While similar in design to that worn by all enlisted men at the time, the band's version was much like today's insignia in that the eagle was separable from a smooth back, allowing it to be easily polished. Finally in 1943 the band received as its cap ornament a wreath like that used before World War I, containing a lyre with the letters U.S., as illustrated immediately below. It is nominally 1.4 inches high.



On the collar band members wore a lyre with the letters U.S., just like the cap device less the wreath. Shown next is a World War II photo of a father (a band member) and his son (a member of the U.S. Navy) wearing a dark cap and tee-shirt issued during the war to reduce

visibility. The band member wears the special collar insignia but the two-piece cap insignia is one of the post 1927 pieces that by WW II were worn by all enlisted personnel.





As mentioned, a special insignia worn by band members during the 1920s and 1930s was the breast plate (below) that went with the diagonal white cross belt. This breast plate had the same design as the ill fated 1<sup>st</sup> cap insignia, but the breast plate was used throughout the inter-war period. Although the cap insignia changed in 1927, the breast plate continued in use.



After World War II U. S. Army Band members received new concert and parade uniforms that included yellow coats (below). These were made from surplus cloth originally intended to trim pre World War I cavalry dress uniforms. In the interest of saving money, the coats were made and issued, but after a short time they began to fade unevenly and were soon withdrawn, replaced by a more standard blue uniform that was issued to special honor guards and bands.

Special ceremonial uniforms were introduced in January 1969 (below) in the inaugural parade. These came with distinctive red caps, large point down chevrons, and a cap insignia that has the motto "Pershing's Own." Uniforms had white summer coats and blue for winter. For concert performances women also had long skirts.



One of the dress cap insignia worn on a special red cap is shown on the next page, on the right. The tall cap insignia has a motto "Pershing's Own," since John Pershing directed the band's formation.

On the dress uniform's high collar went the band's white, gold,

and blue distinctive insignia. Members wore miniature medals and had a special yellow shoulder cord on the left shoulder. A close-up of one band member is illustrated to show these points. The member is unusual in that he has a combat infantry badge and several combat medals.



Another unique part of the band's uniforms are the large, point-down chevrons. Women's chevrons were slightly smaller than those of men. The final photo shows the slightly smaller women's chevrons top and left, while a man's chevron is on the right. These come in white and black backgrounds to blend with the dress coats.

