

## Field Clerk Insignia

Congress authorized “clerks and messengers” in August 6, 1894 and later that year the War Department published regulation changes that gave the Secretary of War the authority to determine which posts and units received these clerks. Those clerks who worked for the Adjutant General’s Department were known as headquarters clerks and others were pay clerks. When congress consolidated the Commissary, Pay, and Quartermaster General’s Departments into the then new Quartermaster Corps in 1912, the pay clerks became part of the Quartermaster Corps. In this way the two types of clerks became associated with two branches.

In the National Defense Act of 1916 pay clerks “now in active service” became second lieutenants in the Quartermaster Corps. Headquarters clerks remained working for the Adjutant General’s Department at various locations in the U.S. and overseas, but were prohibited from serving with the War Department staff.

The army appropriations act for 1917, passed in 1916, provided that “hereafter headquarters clerks shall be known as Army field clerks.” The bill also authorized 200 Army field clerks for the Quartermaster Corps. This created two types of army field clerks: the 160 in the Adjutant General’s Department and the new 200 clerks in the QMC. During World War I the limits on the numbers of authorized field clerks came off and many personnel became field clerks.



With the start of the World War it was clear to everyone that a huge army had to go to France, which meant putting those who traveled overseas in uniform, including the field clerks who up until that time, had worn civilian clothes. In July 1917 the army put clerks into enlisted uniforms, complete with collar insignia. These were a U.S.



one-inch diameter bronze disk on one end of the collar, and a one-inch disk with crossed quill pens on the other end. Two different field clerk disks are shown although many versions exist.



Clerks complained and soon were given officer style uniforms, which necessitated new collar insignia. In late October 1917 clerks first received their new insignia of crossed quill pens in a cut-out style. Army Field Clerks (those clerks assigned to the Adjutant General’s Department) added a small AGD shield in the lower angle. With such simple descriptions during wartime, many designs appeared, three of which are illustrated above.

Field Clerks, Quartermaster Corps, added a small QMC insignia below the pens. Field Clerks, QMC, had crossed pens that were similar but with larger and smaller insignia below, plus

these could come with the eagles facing both left and right, making the insignia in pairs. Two examples are depicted.



Other commonly found WW I period field clerk insignia are just plain quill pens. This design was not authorized in the officer cut-out style, but given that the enlisted insignia were just the pens, probably some manufacturers made these. Two styles appear below.



In 1920 warrant officers began to replace field clerks. As a result of the National Defense Act of June 1920, the army did not appoint any more field clerks, the peak strength during the war having been nearly 3,500 personnel. Those field clerks that remained on active duty continued to wear crossed pens, both as cap insignia and as lapel devices.



On white dress uniforms officers wore gilt insignia and, starting in 1923, the gold colored insignia went on the OD service uniform. Examples of gilt cap ornaments approved in 1921, are above.

The regulation 1923 gilt lapel insignia are in below.



These have small shields or small QMC designs below the pens. In 1924 the designs changed to quill pens with either the AG shield or QMC device superimposed. The 1924 insignia are shown below. Each of these designs came in two sizes: 1-3/4 inches wide for coats, and 1-1/4 inches wide for shirts. In both sizes the insignia for the field clerks, QMC, were made in pairs so the eagles would face forward.



In 1926, due to congressional action, all field clerks became Warrant Officers. This change moved two women into the position of Warrant Officers – Olive Hoskins who was then at VII Corps Area headquarters in Omaha, and Jean Doble, IX Corps Area headquarters in San Francisco. With this action field clerks disappeared from the army.