

Some Artillery Insignia, After 1895

The US Army artillery branch has an interesting history as regiments came and went, and in some cases, units officially known as both batteries and companies existed at the same time. The differences in titles showed the functions of the unit. For a short time after the Spanish-American War artillery regiments had both “N” and “O” batteries since regiments had 14 company-sized units. Insignia reflected the many artillery changes that took place from the Spanish-American War through World War I.

Before 1821 the artillery underwent several short-lived changes. Uniforms generally distinguished units and buttons and headgear insignia were the most common method to tell units apart. The button from the War of 1812 was for the First Artillery Regiment, 1813-1814. The regimental number is below the ornate script “A.” Similar buttons also exist for the 2nd and 3rd regiments. Also shown is a typical cap plate of the War of 1812 period.



In 1821 Congress established four artillery regiments that continued generally unchanged for 80 years. Initially these regiments consisted of nine companies, eight of which were heavy companies that defended the coast, and one light company.

In 1838 Congress added another company and two more in 1847. This brought regiments to 12 batteries, as the company sized units were then known. Two of these batteries were usually light artillery.

The Fifth Regiment, formed by direction of President Lincoln on May 4, 1861, and confirmed by an act of July 12, 1861, continued along with the original four regiments, until 1901. The army added the 6th and 7th Artillery regiments in March 1898. From the Civil War until 1895 their caps carried crossed bullion cannons with the regimental number at the intersection (right).



Starting in 1892, artillery, infantry, and cavalry officers wore on the collars of the new 1892-1895 mohair-trimmed sack coats, silver block letters (right) showing their regiment. Many of these have been remade in recent years and are being sold to collectors as originals.



In 1895 officers' service uniforms changed. The army introduced a new cap with the crown parallel to the cap bottom and sides straight. Officers replaced their cap branch insignia to an embroidered eagle. Simultaneously the War Department directed much of the dark blue sack coat trim be removed and that branch insignia replace the regimental numbers on collars. An example is at the left.



Many officers wore bullion collar insignia on the 1895 coat while other officers had metal versions. A metal

example for the 3rd Artillery is shown. Some officers had an unofficial red background behind the number, especially in state militias. These same insignia went on officers' 1898 khaki coats. While the cannons shown could also have been worn on the 1898 style khaki coats; many officers in the Philippines who wore the first type khaki coat with branch trim, also had shoulder straps embroidered with a gilt eagle. Two examples are illustrated.

Officer shoulder straps for the 1898 khaki uniform were branch colored. These with gold embroidered eagles show the two general styles made in the Philippines: those with the button end rounded and those with parallel sides and the button end finished at 45°.



Enlisted men wore a five-button campaign coat without any insignia other than appropriate rank chevrons. Prior to 1895 enlisted men wore forage caps decorated with pin-back, lead-filled, brass branch insignia on the front (right). The fastener resembled a safety pin. For



the new 1895 cap the army started to make ornaments with a screw post. The specially



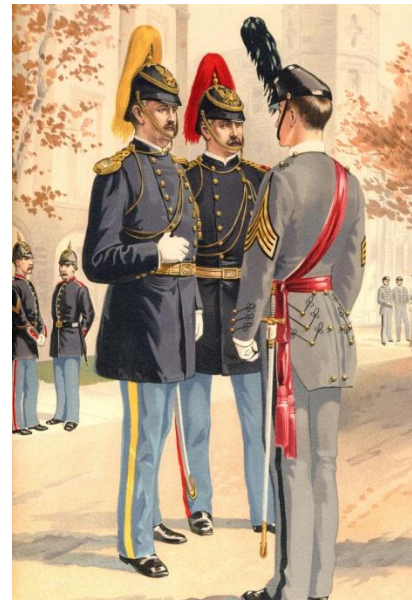
shaped nut accompanied a thin, slightly dished washer. The new cap insignia reverse had two small needle points to keep the device from rotating (left).

The army formed the 7th Artillery Regiment in 1899. Between then and 1901 the seven artillery regiments had 14 batteries, resulting in insignia for "N" and "O" batteries. An 1899-1901 cap insignia for Battery O, 7th Artillery, is at the right. With the 1901 artillery reorganization this unit became the 16th Battery (Siege) and was stationed at Ft. Leavenworth.



Artillery officers' dress uniforms in the 1890s had bullion shoulder knots with red pads that showed the wearer's rank and regimental number. Officers' dress helmets, 1881-1903, had the brass eagle with an overlay of crossed cannons and shield bearing the regimental number. For officers in light batteries and the mounted regimental officers such as the adjutant, the helmets carried red plumes while officers who were not mounted had a gilt spike on their helmet (right).

Enlisted men's dress uniform helmets were similar in trim to the officers' but the eagle was struck from a single piece of brass. They also had red wool helmet cords that replaced the officers' gilt version. Helmet side buttons for both officers and enlisted men had small crossed cannons. The two eagles below are typical of the 1881-1903 helmet eagles, with enlisted men's single insignia on the left and the officers on the right that had the eagle made from one piece of brass and crossed cannons and shield from a second piece.



On the enlisted coats NCOs and specialists wore chevrons. Red wool with black chain stitching for every-day wear and gilt lace on a red wool background for dress uniforms.

Right is an artillery drum major's chevron authorized in 1899 for the blue service uniform. Chevrons made of branch colored wool with chain-stitched bars were introduced in 1872. Many artillery units, unlike other branches, continued to wear the old uniforms and chevrons until 1911 or even later. Below right is a gold lace artillery chief musician's chevron. The army authorized this chevron design in 1899 although gold lace chevrons were introduced in the mid 1880s.






The ease with which the United States invaded the Caribbean islands and the Philippines caused consternation in the US Army and Congress. The conclusion was that the coastal artillery needed to have variable sized organizations since each major harbor needed units tailored to its size. The concept of the field artillery was that a battery could be attached to infantry or cavalry battalions to provide direct fire support as dictated by the tactical situation. The upshot was a totally new artillery organization. With the organizational change came new insignia. Soon Congress also significantly increased the artillery to provide for greater coastal defense.



Under an act of Congress approved February 2, 1901, all artillery units became part of the Artillery Corps. It consisted of 30 field artillery batteries and 126 coast artillery companies. For officers the 1901 Artillery Corps insignia, announced in July 1901, was

crossed cannons with a plain red oval at the intersection. The 1890s artillery insignia had a black oval at the intersection with the regimental number. Since the 1901 corps had no regiments an insignia with a plain center was an obvious solution and red, the artillery color, made the device slightly different from the earlier version. Three 1901 Artillery Corps collar insignia for the 1895 officer's sack coat are shown below, the last being metal but in imitation embroidery.

		
<p>An officer's 1901 Artillery Corps insignia. The red oval is painted on this particular insignia that is stamped from brass.</p>	<p>A 1901 Artillery Corps officer's collar insignia with sew-on fastening loops and a red enamel center. These insignia with the red center and no number replaced the design with black oval and gilt number.</p>	<p>An imitation embroidery, pin-back, 1901 Artillery Corps collar insignia for the 1895 style coat.</p>



An example of a shoulder knot for the 1901 Artillery Corps. These went on an officer's uniform shown previously. Since the artillery had no regiments at this time, the branch device went on the center of the pad, where previously regimental numbers had been embroidered.

Enlisted artillerymen in the 1901 Corps wore cap devices with the screw-post fasteners introduced in 1896, showing crossed cannons as before, but with the company or battery number

below. The noncommissioned staff of artillery districts, which had replaced regiments as the higher headquarters for the companies, wore plain cannons with no number or letter.







With the abolition of artillery regiments in 1901 and the numbering of coastal artillery companies and field artillery batteries, enlisted men wore their unit number below this style of heavy crossed cannons until 1905. The insignia was worn by men in the 18th Company, stationed at Ft. Schuyler, NY, and by members of the 18th Battery, a mountain artillery unit stationed in

Manila, the Philippines. NCOs such as sergeants major who were assigned to artillery districts wore insignia without any company number.

In 1902 Congress again reorganized the artillery. It ended the Artillery Corps formed the year before and created a Coast Artillery Corps. The numbered companies were part of the new CAC and enlisted insignia did not change, but officers' did. CAC officers

added a projectile to the red oval at the cannons' center. To distinguish officers assigned to the field artillery, they added a wheel to the central oval.


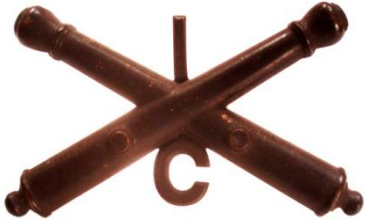


		
<p>When Congress did away with the Artillery Corps in 1902, field artillery officers added a wheel to their branch insignia. Cannons on insignia until 1905 were the short, stubby guns.</p>	<p>With the creation of the Coast Artillery Corps in 1902, those officers added a projectile to the central red oval to distinguish between the field artillery.</p>	<p>Coast Artillery Corps officer insignia came in many versions, as in this initiation embroidery piece in silver color.</p>
		
<p>On service uniforms field artillery officers wore bronze insignia, the equivalent of recent subdued devices.</p>	<p>A dark bronze colored 1902-1905 CAC officer's insignia for the service uniform with a red oval.</p>	<p>A bronze colored Coast Artillery Corps insignia with a gilt projectile at the center.</p>

Cannons shown on insignia up to this point had been medium length cannons with reinforcing bands. In late 1904 the Quartermaster General's Department redesigned the artillery insignia to show longer field guns. This impacted enlisted and officer insignia.

	
<p>A dress 1905-1907 field artillery officer's insignia.</p>	<p>An 1905-1907 officer's field artillery service insignia.</p>
	
<p>A coast artillery officer's dress</p>	<p>A coast artillery officer's bronze</p>

insignia introduced in 1905. This design lasted until 1951.	colored insignia for use on field uniforms in the 1905 pattern.
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Some of the new enlisted pieces, first made in 1905, are shown. For enlisted men this style of thinner cannons continued for several years. On the cap and collar CAC enlisted men in companies wore thin crossed cannons with their company number below. Starting in 1907 NCOs on district staffs, equal to regimental staffs, began to wear crossed cannons in a wreath.

	
<p>This 1905 to early 1907 service uniform insignia would have been worn by enlisted men of the 3rd Battery, and also by men of the 3rd Company of coast artillery.</p>	<p>In early 1907 the army formed field artillery regiments resulting in insignia with regimental number above and battery below between 1907 and 1910.</p>
	
<p>Insignia with numbers above 30 were for coast artillery companies only. If insignia are pin-back they went on the collar; if it has a screw-post it went on the cap.</p>	<p>Coast artillery NCOs assigned to artillery districts wore this style of cap insignia starting in 1907.</p>





In January 1907, Congress recreated artillery regiments, but this time, making all of them field artillery regiments. The six field artillery regiments had two battalions of three batteries each. General Orders of April 1907 called for officers to wear crossed field guns with the regimental number in the upper angle. This eliminated the wheel at the center of field artillery officer insignia. With some minor design modifications, the basic crossed cannons are the insignia still worn today. The small quartermaster

device in the lower angle indicates the officer who wore it was the regimental supply officer. Such staff devices were authorized until 1923.

The enlisted men of field artillery began to wear similar crossed field guns on their collars. Battery members wore regimental numbers above and battery letters below, while field artillery regimental non commissioned staff (regimental sergeant major; regimental supply sergeant, regimental commissary sergeant, two color sergeants, and two battalion sergeants major) wore the cannons with regimental number only. In the field artillery enlisted personnel wore the same design of insignia on the cap as on the

collar. The only difference between the cap and collar insignia is the fastening device: screw-post for the cap and pin-back for the collar.

In 1910 the War Department started to issue one-inch diameter bronze disks as collar insignia for enlisted wear on service uniforms. For the CAC the disks had cannons crossed high on the disk to allow room for the company number below. The Coast Artillery Corps had no regimental organizations until a few were formed in World War I. CAC company numbers went below the cannons. Field artillery soldiers had cannons crossed a little lower and these carried the regimental number above and battery letter below.

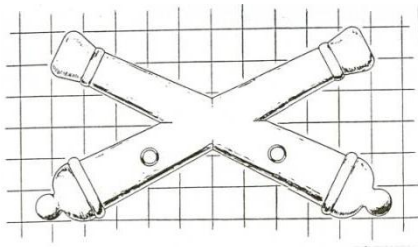
	
<p>A 1910 style coast artillery collar insignia for service uniform. District staff NCOs wore plain cannons without any number.</p>	<p>A 1910 style field artillery collar insignia for service uniform. Regimental staff NCOs wore the upper number only.</p>



In 1919-1920 collar insignia for artillery commissioned band leaders had a small lyre below. This device matches exactly insignia in contemporary official photos from the war's end. The lyre is small and very different from the fakes that have abounded in the last 15 or so years.

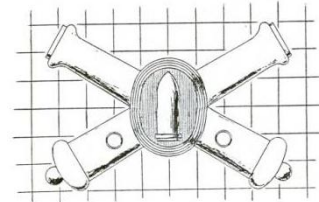
During World War I Field Artillery officers added letters to the enormously expanded branch to show special units. The most common were those assigned to ammunition trains, the units that supplied ammunition to the firing batteries, but trench mortar officers also added their letters.





FIELD ARTILLERY

OFFICERS
WHEN APPLICABLE THE REGIMENTAL NUMBER WILL BE IN THE UPPER ANGLE. FOR NUMERALS SEE DRAWING 4-4-35.



COAST ARTILLERY CORPS

OFFICERS
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The crossed cannons from World War I until the 1960s displayed a variety of guns, often designed by each firm that struck the insignia. In 1936 the Quartermaster General's Office made a concerted effort to update and define in detail insignia designs. Shown

above are extracts from the June 15, 1936 drawing that prescribed both artillery officer insignia. Some actual insignia from the 1930s through 1950 follow.

<p>A 1930s insignia with a long, thin projectile.</p>	<p>The muzzles on this are rounded and the shell is not as thin as on the other two.</p>	<p>This matches most closely the 1936 official design</p>
<p>A 1942 insignia with cannons which are similar to the official design.</p>	<p>Long, thin field guns that were similar to the post 1905 artillery cannons.</p>	<p>The gun tubes are very thin near the muzzles in this 1930s insignia.</p>



In 1950 congress eliminated the coast artillery and consolidated the two artillery branches. Everyone was part of the artillery and wore crossed cannons until 1958 when the branch modified their crossed cannons by adding a vertical missile (left). At the time this was just a modernization of the artillery insignia, but in 1968 the artillery branch split into two arms. The newly formed air defense artillery continued with the two cannons and missile, while the field artillery branch reverted to the pre-1958 crossed cannons. Many insignia with the missile had unit numbers, usually red, at the intersection, although a few had numbers in the horizontal side angles or elsewhere.



Enlisted insignia followed the officers' general designs. A few from the 1920 through the end of the 20th century are illustrated.

<p>A circa 1924 field artillery enlisted collar insignia.</p>	<p>The coast artillery had anti-aircraft responsibilities.</p>	<p>Between 1927-1937 band members added a small lyre.</p>	<p>Coast artillery company numbers still went below.</p>
<p>Some enlisted disks have the design separable, which was a prelude to the smooth, polished background.</p>	<p>A field artillery regimental enlisted insignia, c. 1940, for the ammunition train.</p>	<p>A pre 1941 insignia for an ammunition train. All insignia in this table have screw-post backs.</p>	<p>Officially in 1937 the army introduced smooth insignia although they had been sold privately well before that.</p>

After World War II enlisted collar insignia continued to display the same weapons as officers and they were on a one-inch circular background.

<p>For Headquarters & Service Battery. The fastener has two tines.</p>	<p>The fastener shows this was made during or after World War II.</p>	<p>Post 1958 for all artillery or ADA after 1968.</p>	<p>Made in Germany by engraving the design.</p>