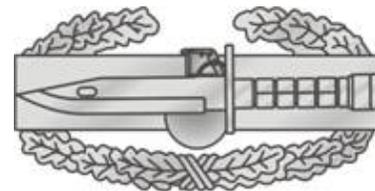
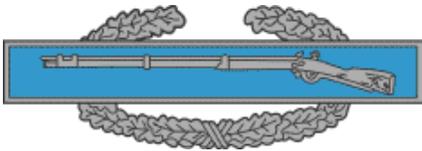
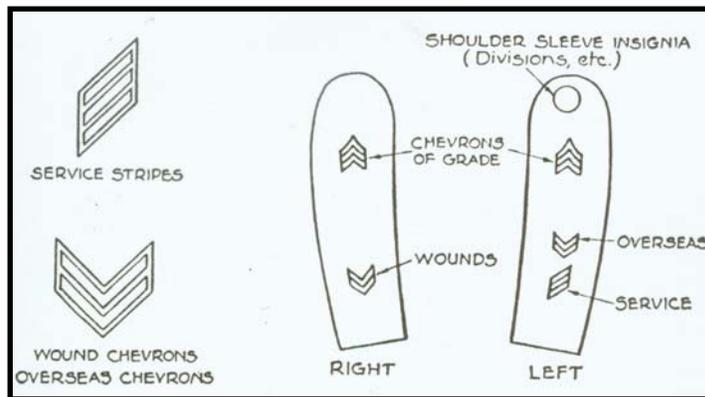




AIR FORCE ENLISTED HERITAGE RESEARCH INSTITUTE



HISTORY OF COMBAT SERVICE INSIGNIAS



Malcolm W. McVicar JR., CMSgt, USAF

Sharee A. Hileman, TSgt, USAF

William I. Chivalette, GS-11, USAF

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HISTORY OF COMBAT SERVICE PATCHES OR INSIGNIAS

Our first attempts to recognize those members who served during a war or seen combat was through the use of overseas chevrons and bars to indicate their service during times of war. During the Second meeting of the Air Force Uniform Board in August of 1949, the results of a questionnaire were presented concerning the new Air Force uniform appearance. The questionnaire polled 3,550 personnel at Bolling AFB, Andrews AFB and the USAF Special Activities Wing. (4:3) The questions and results are listed below as written in the report. (4:2)

1. Do you feel that it is necessary to retain the combat unit patch on the right shoulder as part of the new Air Force uniform?
52.5% No 36.0% Yes 11.5% no opinion
2. Do you feel that it is a good idea to indicate to what major command an airman is assigned by requiring him to wear the patch on his left shoulder?
52.3% No 41.0% Yes 6.7% No opinion
3. Do you feel airmen should continue to be required to wear hash marks on the new uniform?
52.7% No 39.3% Yes 8.0% No opinion
4. Do you feel it necessary to indicate that an airman has served overseas by requiring the wearing of overseas bars when theater ribbons serve a similar purpose?
57.0% No 36.0% Yes 7.0% No opinion
5. Are you anxious to wear a uniform which would show only the U.S. insignia, your rating and whatever ribbons you are authorized?
25.5% No 58.5% Yes 16.0% No opinion

In addition to the questionnaire, and results presented from the second Air Force Uniform Board, a memorandum was presented to Maj Gen D.C. Strother by Col Earley E. W. Duncan, Director of Military Personnel, titled "Certain Recommendations of the Uniform Board Meeting" 12 December 1949. His memo spoke to the morale factor of the troops. He explained morale is paramount as it is a natural desire to advertise one's service as to combat, merit and longevity. His recommendation was in favor of retaining present devices on the new Air Force uniform.

"It is extremely important to individuals who have the right to wear patches, stripes, and ribbons, whether they exercise the right or not. The current Air Force patch on the left shoulder is a stimulant of pride in the present organization. It is a convenient notification that the wearer "belongs"... Overseas stripes are very much akin to the combat patches and are probably the most prized of any sleeve device. The Navy does not use overseas stripes, but there are some grounds for saying that many Navy personnel would like to have them. Federal service stripes are now a duplication of the Good Conduct Medal, which itself is under study for revision." (5:2)

World War I Chevrons

One overseas chevron was authorized for each six months of service in a theater of operation from 6 April 1917 to 4 October 1919; with American Expeditionary force in Siberia to include 1 April 1920; or the Army of Occupation in Germany and Austria-Hungary to include 1 August 1920. (1:210)

World War II Service Bars

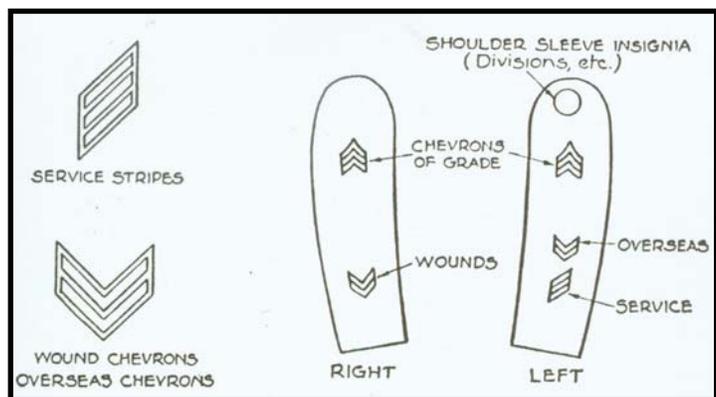
This overseas chevron was authorized for each six months of service as a member of the US Army outside of the continental United States from 7 December 1941 to 2 September 1946. (1:210)

Service Stripes (diagonal)

These were awarded to enlisted for each three year period of service. (1:215)



MSgt Horst W. Tittel
Army Air Corps shoulder
patch, WW I and WW II
Oversea Bars, Enlisted Service
Stripes (2)



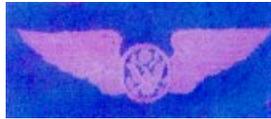
Shoulder Sleeve as Worn During World War I,
Overseas Service Bars, Enlisted Service Stripes,
and Wound Chevrons (1:215)

On 22 December 1949 a conference was held in the Pentagon to discuss recommendations for the Chief of Staff concerning the new Air Force uniform. With a view toward simplification of the new uniform and enhancing its appearance, the Air Force Uniform Board recommended the removal of unit insignia loops, patches from the shoulders (left and right), overseas bars WWI and WWII, service stripes, and wound chevrons. Overseas bars WWI and WWII, service stripes, and wound chevrons were allowed to be worn at the individual's expense. This remained until the mid 1950s when all overseas bars WWI and WWII, service stripes, and wound chevrons were removed from all uniforms.

The letter and results of the questionnaire differed and thus may have driven the decision to remove all shoulder sleeve devices from the new Air Force uniform. Air Force Uniform Board minutes written after 1950 make no mention to these devices, with the exception of the Combat Crew badge and Combat Readiness Medal, until the nineties when the field submitted recommendations to bring back the Combat Patch.

The 89th Air Force Uniform Board met on 15 May 1991 and discussed agenda items 89-20 and 89-21 concerning the authorization to wear the Army Special Forces Tab on the Battle Dress Uniform and Service Coat and Army Unit Patch on the Battle Dress Uniform. The board recommended disapproval of both proposals citing the suggestions are not in keeping with the Air Force uniform philosophy and could lead to a proliferation in the wear of Army or other service patches on the Air Force uniform. Subsequent to the board proceedings, AF/DPU reviewed the Department of the Army guidelines for the wear of those patches. They determined the Army Regulation 670-1 para 28-17b(3) doesn't authorize either patch for wear by Air Force, Navy or Marine members. This was re-addressed during the 94th Air Force Uniform Board with agenda item 94-96 to allow personnel attached with an Army unit to wear the associated units patch or combat patch on their battle Dress Uniform. On 17 March 1995 a message was sent out authorizing the wear of the Army unit patch or combat patch for those personnel attached to Army unit.

Through the years several other badges, medals, and patches were worn by individuals who served in a combat environment or stood combat ready. The following is a brief explanation of each of these badges, medals, and patches.



COMBAT CREW PATCH

During WWII Combat Crews were allowed to wear a blue cloth patch sewn on the uniform on which aeronautical badges were worn. This was authorized to prevent non-aircrew members from pinning on wings when off base to "impress the girls." USAAF Flight Badges were worn by Members of the Eighth Air Force During WWII, research compiled by Harry D. Gobrecht, 303rd Bomb Group (H) Association Historian. This information was from a single internet source and could not be verified by any military documents.



COMBAT CREWMEMBER QUALIFICATION BADGE

The Combat Crewmember Badge was established by the Air Force on 1 September 1964 and worn by those personnel serving in positions in which they are accruing creditable service towards the Combat Readiness Medal as outlined in Air Force regulation 900-48. This was a qualification badge and not a medal; therefore it was not a permanent award. The Air Force eliminated the Combat Crewmember Qualification Badge from wear in August of 1993, addressing uniform accouterments to eliminate duplication, achieve standardization, and promote an uncluttered appearance.



COMBAT READINESS MEDAL

This medal was authorized by the Secretary of the Air Force on March 9, 1964, and amended Aug. 28, 1967. Originally created as a personal decoration ranking above the Commendation Medals, Lifesaving Medals and the Purple Heart, its current status has been changed to an achievement/service medal. It is awarded to members of the U.S. Air Force and Air Force Reserve, and to members of other services after Aug. 1, 1960, for sustained individual combat or mission readiness or preparedness for direct weapon-system employment. Specifically, a service member must meet the following criteria: complete an aggregate 24 months of sustained professional performance as a member of U.S. Air Force combat or mission-ready units subject to combat readiness reporting; or be individually certified as combat or mission ready and have maintained individual readiness the entire period according to a major headquarters; or subject to an individual positional evaluation program according to a higher headquarters standard. The term "Combat Ready" is defined as being professionally and technically qualified in an aircraft crew position in an aircraft that can be used in combat.

The other military services also have badges, medals and patches to recognize their participation in a combat environment. These are currently worn by all service members with the exception of the Air Force, unless specifically authorized.



COMBAT MEDICAL BADGES

An oxidized silver badge 1 inch in height and 1 ½ inches in width, consisting of a stretcher crossed by a caduceus surmounted at top by a Greek cross, all on and over an elliptical oak wreath. Stars are added to indicate subsequent awards; one star at top for the second award, one star at top and one at bottom for the third award, one star at top and one at each side for the fourth award.

The Medical Corps insignia of branch, modified by the addition of a Greek cross suggesting the Geneva Convention between the wings and the entwined serpents, signifies the recipient's skills

and expertise. It is superimposed upon a stretcher alluding to medical field service. The oak symbolizes steadfastness, strength and loyalty.

The following medical personnel, assigned or attached by appropriate orders to an infantry unit of brigade, regimental, or smaller size, or to a medical unit of company or smaller size, organic to an infantry unit of brigade or smaller size, during any period the infantry unit is engaged in actual ground combat are eligible for award of the badge, provided they are personally present and under fire during such ground combat:

(1) Subsequent to 6 December 1941 – Army Medical Department (Colonels and below), the Navy Medical Department (Captains and below), the Air Force Medical Service (Colonels and below), assigned or attached to the Army, who have satisfactorily performed medical duties.

(2) Subsequent to 19 December 1989 – Special Forces personnel possessing military occupational specialty 18D (Special Operations Medical Sergeant) who satisfactorily performed medical duties while assigned or attached to a Special Forces unit during any period the unit is engaged in actual ground combat, provided they are personally present and under fire. Retroactive awards are not authorized.

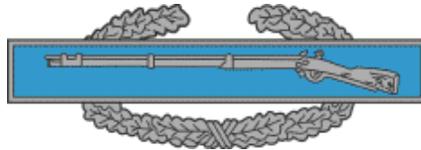
(3) Subsequent to 16 January 1991 – Personnel outlined in (1) above, assigned or attached to Armor or ground Cavalry units of brigade or smaller size, who satisfactorily performed medical duties while the unit is engaged in actual ground combat, provided they are personally present and under fire. Retroactive awards are not authorized.

(4) Subsequent to 18 September 2001 – Medical personnel assigned or attached to or under operational control of any ground Combat Arms units (not to include members assigned or attached to Aviation units) of brigade or smaller size, who satisfactorily performed medical duties while the unit is engaged in active ground combat, provided they are personally present and under fire. Retroactive awards are not authorized for service prior to 18 September 2001.

(5) Effective 3 June 2005, soldiers possessing MOS of 18D are no longer eligible for award of the Combat Medical Badge.

Awards will not be made to general or flag officers. Specific eligibility requirements by geographic area are listed in Army Regulation 600-8-22.

The Combat Medical Badge was approved on 29 January 1945. In February 1951, the proposal to designate the badge as a one-time award was rescinded, and it was approved for subsequent award during specified periods. The addition of stars to indicate subsequent awards was also approved. Policy changes were approved on 12 May 2004, by the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1. On 11 February 2005, the Chief of Staff, Army, approved changes to the Combat Medical Badge policy. (9)



COMBAT INFANTRYMAN BADGE

The Combat Infantryman Badge is an award of the United States Army which is presented to those officers, warrant officers and enlisted soldiers, in the grade of Colonel and below, who participate in active ground combat while assigned as a member of an infantry or special forces unit, brigade or smaller size, during any period subsequent to December 6, 1941. It and the simultaneously created Expert Infantryman Badge were created with the primary goal of recognizing the sacrifices of the infantrymen who were disproportionately likely to be killed or wounded during World War II. (9)



MARINE CORPS EXPEDITIONARY MEDAL

The Marine Corps Expeditionary Medal is a decoration of the United States Marine Corps which was first created on May 8, 1919. Originally known as the *Marine Corps Expeditionary Ribbon*, a full sized medal was authorized in July 1921 by Presidential Order of Warren G. Harding. The Marine Corps Expeditionary Medal is therefore one of the oldest decorations of the United States military which is still issued to active duty personnel.

To be awarded the Marine Corps Expeditionary Medal, personnel must have engaged in a landing on foreign territory, participated in combat operations against an opposing force, or must have participated in a designated operation for which no other service medal is authorized. After 1961, some commands permitted eligible personnel to choose between the Marine Corps Expeditionary Medal, or the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, depending on the nature of the operation in question.

Subsequent awards of the Marine Corps Expeditionary Medal were originally denoted by award numerals. After 1921, multiple awards were denoted by service stars. The Wake Island Device is authorized for any personnel who were awarded the Marine Corps Expeditionary Medal as part of the defense of Wake Island during the opening days of the Second World War. (11)

The United States Navy equivalent of the Marine Corps Expeditionary Medal is known as the Navy Expeditionary Medal



NAVY EXPEDITIONARY MEDAL

The Navy Expeditionary Medal is an award of the United States Navy which was first created in August 1936 by General Orders of the Department of the Navy. The Navy Expeditionary Medal is awarded to any Navy personnel who have operated in foreign territory to engage in operations, both combat and non-combat, for which no other campaign medal has been awarded.

The Navy Expeditionary Medal is retroactively authorized to February 12, 1874. The medal is one of the few Navy awards which is not bestowed to the United States Marine Corps, as Marine Corps personnel are eligible for the Marine Corps Expeditionary Medal. In addition, since 1961, some Navy commands permit service members to choose between the Navy Expeditionary Medal and the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal for participation in certain operations. Both awards may not be bestowed simultaneously for the same action.

Additional awards of the Navy Expeditionary Medal are denoted by service stars. The Wake Island Device is authorized for those service members who were awarded the Navy Expeditionary Medal through the defense of Wake Island. (11)



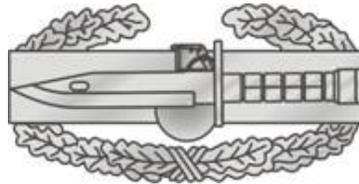
COMBAT ACTION RIBBON

The Combat Action Ribbon is a personal military decoration of the United States Navy and United States Marine Corps, which is awarded to those who, in any grade including and below that of a Captain in the Navy (or Colonel in the Marine Corps), have actively participated in ground or surface combat. The Combat Action Ribbon is also awarded to members of the United States Coast Guard when operating under the control of the Navy.

The Combat Action Ribbon was first created in February 1969 with retroactive presentation to 1961-03-01. On 1999-10-05, by Presidential Order of Bill Clinton, the retroactive effective date of the Combat Action Ribbon was changed to 1941-12-07 which was the entry date of the United States of America into the Second World War.

To be awarded the Combat Action Ribbon, a service member must have actively participated in bonafide ground or naval combat with hostile enemy forces. Such performance under enemy fire must be deemed "honorable and satisfactory" which excludes the award to those who show cowardice in the face of an enemy or retreat without cause. (10)

Personnel who earned the Combat Infantryman Badge or Combat Medical Badge as a member of the United States Army may be authorized to wear the Combat Action Ribbon upon application to the Department of the Navy. As of May 2005, the U.S. Army has created a new decoration known as the Combat Action Badge (previously to be known as the Combat Recognition Ribbon) which is considered the direct Army equivalent to the Combat Action Ribbon.



COMBAT ACTION BADGE

A silver badge 2 inches in width overall, consisting of an oak wreath supporting a rectangle bearing a bayonet surmounting a grenade, all silver. Stars are added at the top to indicate subsequent awards; one star for the second award, two stars for the third award and three stars for the fourth award.

In keeping with the spirit of the Warrior Ethos, the Combat Action Badge provides special recognition to Soldiers who personally engage the enemy, or are engaged by the enemy during combat operations. The bayonet and grenade are associated with active combat. The oak wreath symbolizes strength and loyalty.

The Combat Action Badge may be awarded by any commander delegated authority by the Secretary of the Army during wartime or the CG, U.S. Army Human Resources Command and will be announced in permanent orders.

(1) The requirements for award of the Combat Action Badge are Branch and MOS immaterial. Assignment to a Combat Arms unit or a unit organized to conduct close or offensive combat operations, or performing offensive combat operations is not required to qualify for the Combat Action Badge. However, it is not intended to award all soldiers who serve in a combat zone or imminent danger area.

(2) Specific Eligibility Requirements:

- a. May be awarded to any soldier.
- b. Soldier must be performing assigned duties in an area where hostile fire pay or imminent danger pay is authorized.
- c. Soldier must be personally present and actively engaging or being engaged by the enemy, and performing satisfactorily in accordance with the prescribed rules of engagement.
- d. Soldier must not be assigned/attached to a unit that would qualify the soldier for the Combat Infantryman Badge or Combat Medical Badge.

(3) May be awarded to members from the other U.S. Armed Forces and foreign soldiers assigned to a U.S. Army unit, provided they meet the above criteria.

(4) Award of the Combat Action Badge is authorized from 18 September 2001 to a date to be determined. Award for qualifying service in any previous conflict is not authorized.

(5) Subsequent awards:

- a. Only one Combat Action Badge may be awarded during a qualifying period.
- b. Second and third awards of the Combat Action Badge for subsequent qualifying periods will be indicated by superimposing one and two stars respectively, centered at the top of the badge between the points of the oak wreath.

(6) Retroactive awards for the Combat Action Badge are not authorized prior to 18 September 2001, applications (to include supporting documentation) for retroactive awards of the Combat Action Badge will be forwarded through the first two star general in the chain of command to CG, U.S. Army Human Resources Command, ATTN: AHRC-PDO-PA, Alexandria, VA 22332-0471.

(7) Wear policy is contained in Army Regulation 670-1.

(8) Soldiers may be awarded the Combat Infantryman Badge, Combat Medical Badge and Combat Action Badge for the same qualifying period, provided the criteria for each badge is met. However, subsequent awards of the same badge within the same qualifying period are not authorized.

On 2 May 2005, the Chief of Staff, Army, approved the creation of the Combat Action Badge to provide special recognition to soldiers who personally engage, or are engaged by the enemy. HQDA Letter 600-05-1, dated 3 June 2005, announced the establishment of the Combat Action Badge. (9)

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