

# **90th Infantry Division Preservation Group Uniform & Equipment Guide**

December 2013



## 90th IDPG

# Uniform & Equipment Guide

The purpose of this guide is to ensure that every member of the 90th IDPG has the same basic understanding of the historically accurate manner of wear of the uniform of the World War II infantryman assigned to the 90th Infantry Division. **This is meant to be a set of guidelines for the reenactor, not a regulation.** Uniform regulations changed over the course of summer 1940 – summer 1945 (the time from the beginning of the National Emergency to the end of the war), and they were observed and enforced to varying degrees.

It is important for each reenactor to research thoroughly his “persona” and to achieve an historically accurate impression for the wartime GI. Remember – we are recreating for the public, our fellow reenactors, and most importantly, for the veterans and their families, a picture of how the American soldier of WWII lived and fought. Try to strive for the rule, not the exception.

The US Army uniforms of WWII covered a wide variety of types for a multitude of purposes and climates, and there have been hundreds of books printed on the subject. For our purposes, we will concentrate on those uniforms typically worn by soldiers of the 358th Infantry in the United States from March 1942 – March 1944 and in the European Theater of Operations (ETO) from April 1944 through the summer of 1945. Generally, these are service uniforms (Classes A, B and C) and combat/field uniforms. We will also discuss uniform accessories and insignia.

As a reenactor, you are an amateur historian; it is important for you to learn how to research the historical accuracy of your impression. This Guide is a starting point.

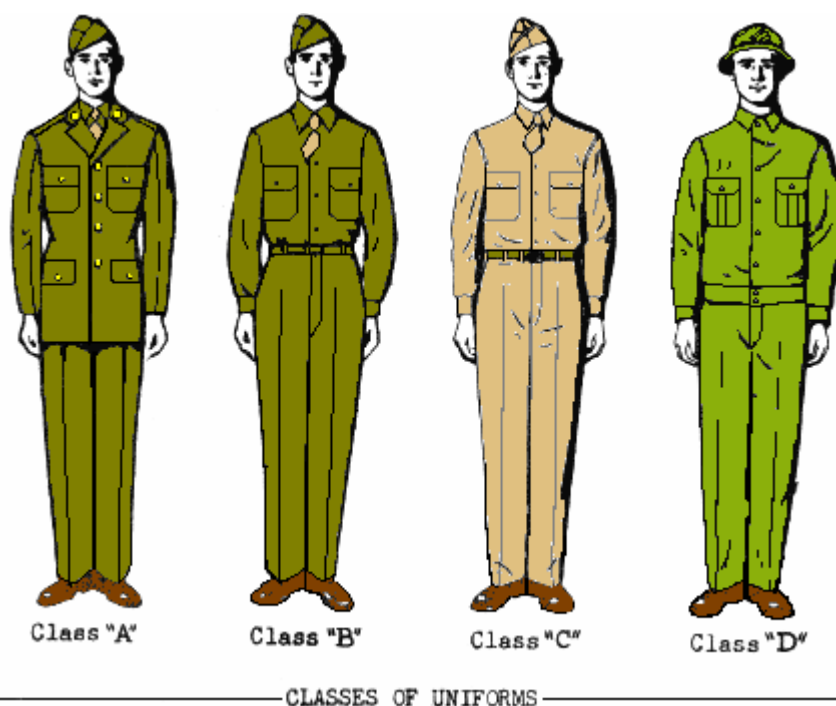


Fig. 1: Classes of Uniform

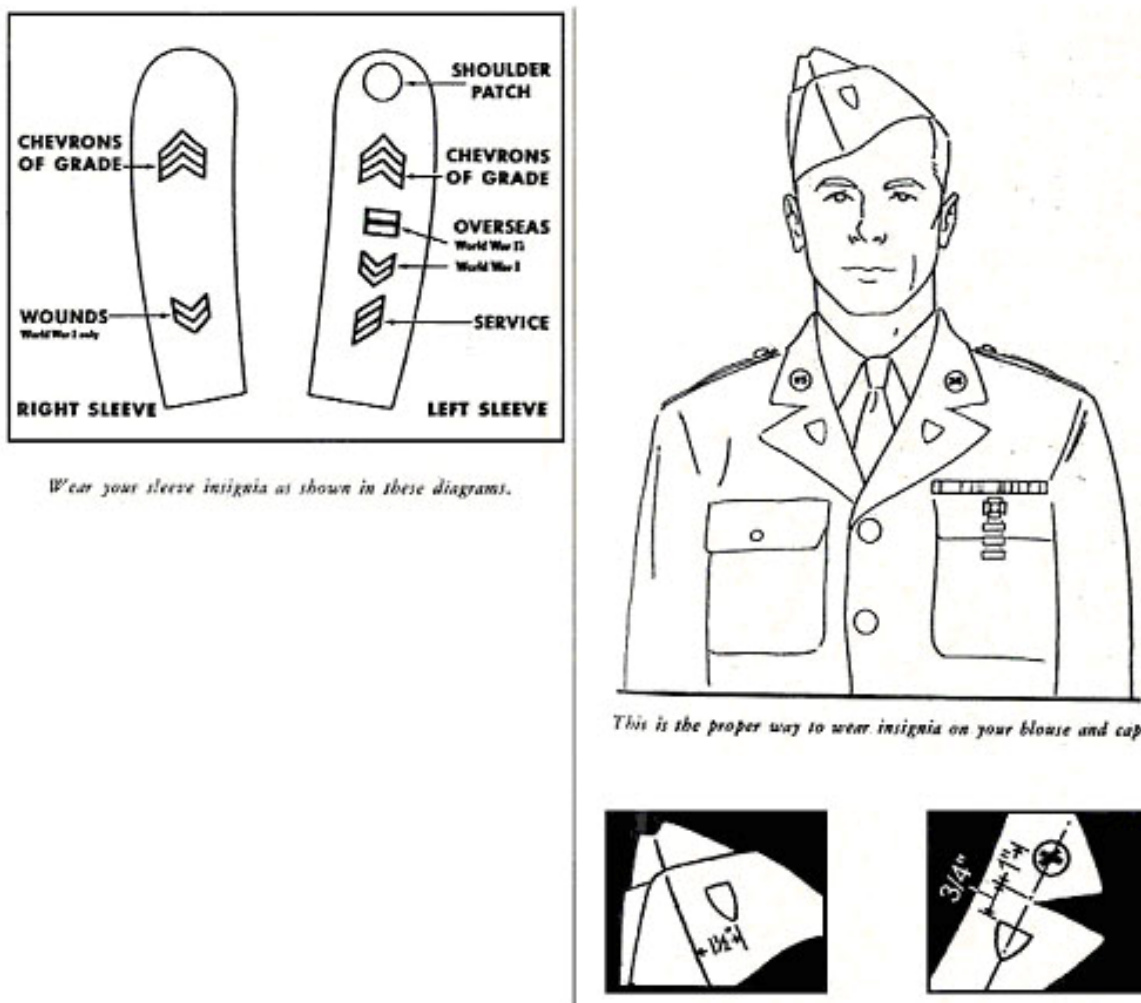


Fig. 2: Excerpt from an early WWII-Era Uniform Guide

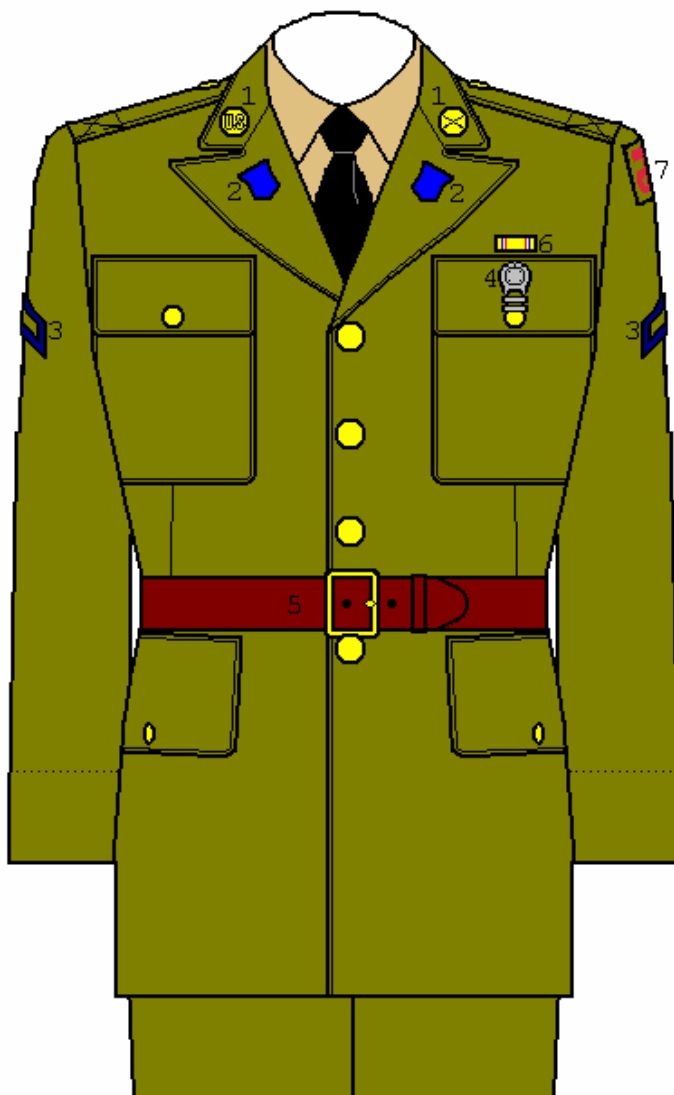


Fig 3: Shoulder Sleeve Insignia (SSI), 90th Infantry Division & Distinctive Insignia (DI), 358th Infantry Regiment

The 90th Infantry Division – also known originally as the “Texas & Oklahoma Division” and later as the “Tough ‘Ombres” was activated at Camp Barkely, near Abilene, Texas on 25 March 1942. The SSI was based on one adopted at the end of World War I, and the motto *PERAGIMUS* is Latin for “We Accomplish.”

## SERVICE UNIFORMS

The 358th Infantry was an Organized Reserve regiment assigned to the 90th Division headquartered at Fort Worth, Texas. The standard service uniform consisted of an olive drab (OD) coat, trousers, web belt w/ enlisted (open face) buckle, shirt & tie, garrison cap, socks (OD or tan), and “Type II” service shoes (low quarter shoes were an optional purchase). The enlisted garrison belt was normally worn with the coat until mid-1942 when it phased out as a leather conservation measure. The shirt was OD wool or khaki cotton. The necktie was black mohair until September 1942, when the OD shade 3 tie became the only type authorized.



### Typical insignia:

- 1) Infantry and US collar insignia
- 2) 358th Infantry Regimental DIs\*
- 3) Grade chevrons
- 4) Marksmanship qualification badge(s)
- 5) Russet brown garrison belt
- 6) Available awards:  
American Defense Service Medal (one year active service between 8 September 1939 – 7 December 1941)\*\*
- 7) Shoulder sleeve insignia, 90th Infantry Division

\*The Army discontinued procurement of DIs in 1942; it would have been uncommon for soldiers who entered service after this time to have complete sets of regimental DIs.

\*\*Very few soldiers of the division would have been eligible for this award, as the vast majority were selectees with insufficient time in service.

Fig. 4: Typical Service Uniform (Class A), March – August 1942

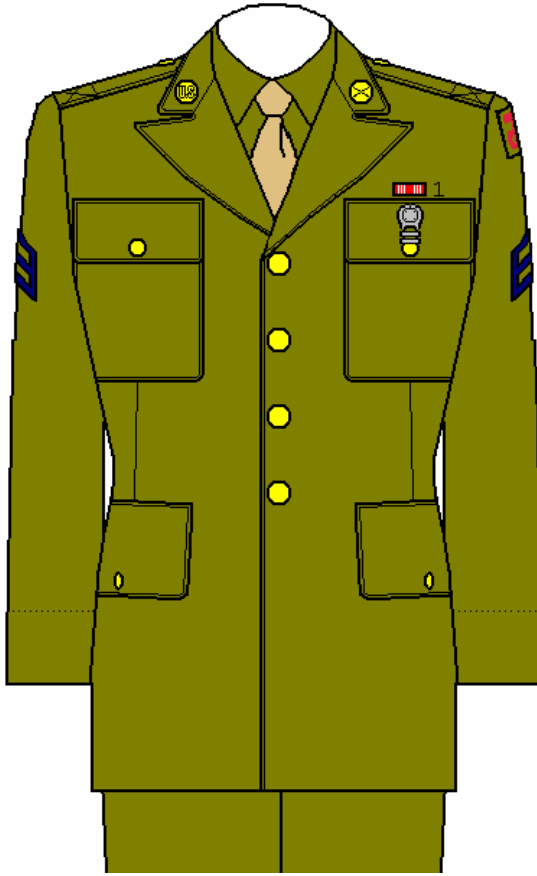


Fig. 5: Typical Service Uniform, September 1942 – May 1944

Typical insignia (same as above, plus):

1) Available awards: Good Conduct Ribbon (awarded to enlisted soldiers for one year of wartime service after 7 December 1941)

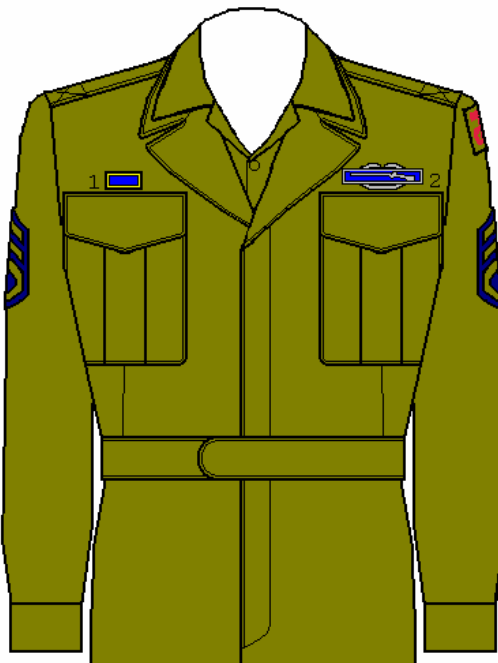


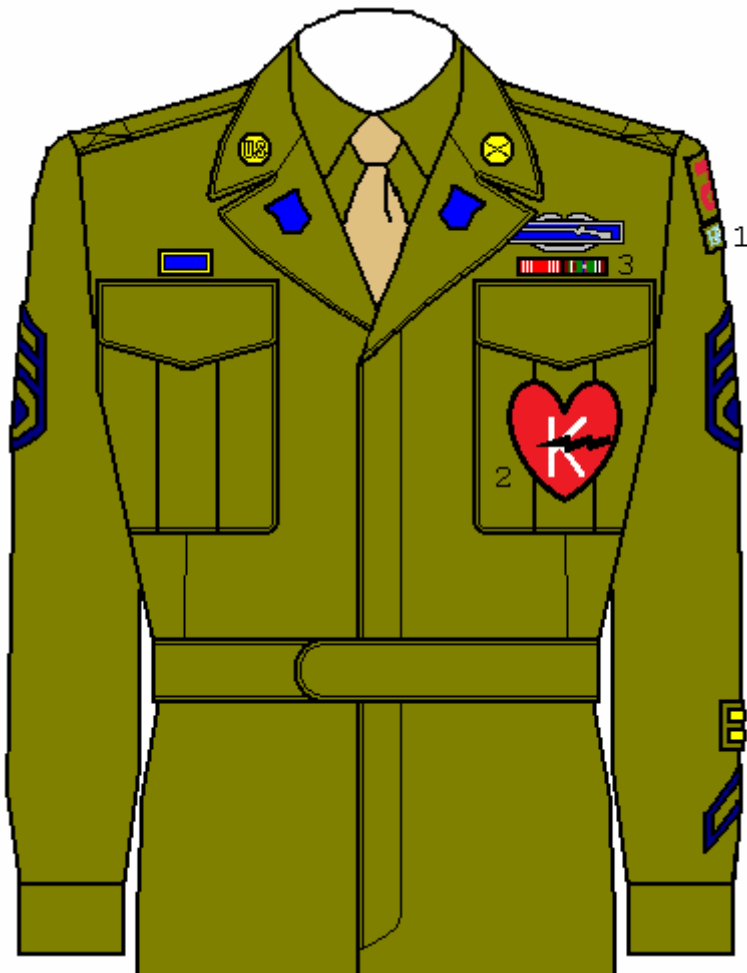
Fig. 6: Variant Service Uniform – M1944 (“Eisenhower/Ike”) Jacket, May-June ‘45

Variant insignia (grade and SSI worn, collar disks optional):

1) Distinguished Unit Badge (3rd Battalion only); awarded for action of 10-12 July, 1944 at the Forêt de mont Castré /“Hill 122” on 24 February 1945

2) Combat Infantry Badge; awarded to all personnel assigned to an infantry unit engaged in combat against an enemy for satisfactory performance of duty. First awarded to soldiers of Company M, 358th Infantry on 17 August 1944; K/358 Inf on 1 October 1944.

Note: Cleaned and polished combat boots were the usual footwear with the “Ike” jacket uniform.



Typical insignia (same as above, plus):

- 1) Tough ‘Ombres tab
- 2) “Kraut Killer” badge (a K Company-only badge, locally authorized by the commander for five verified enemy kills)
- 3) European-African-Middle-Eastern Campaign Medal with arrowhead and silver campaign star denoting amphibious assault landing in OVERLORD and five campaign participation credits (Normandy, Northern France, Ardennes-Alsace, Rhineland, Central Germany)
- 4) Overseas service (“Hershey”) bars (one for each six months of service outside the continental U.S.; 358th Infantry departed NYPOE on xx Mar. 1944, arrived NYPOD xx Jan 1946)
- 5) Service stripes (enlisted only; one for each three-year term of service)

Fig. 7: Typical Service Uniform – M1944 (“Eisenhower/Ike”) Jacket, July – December 1945

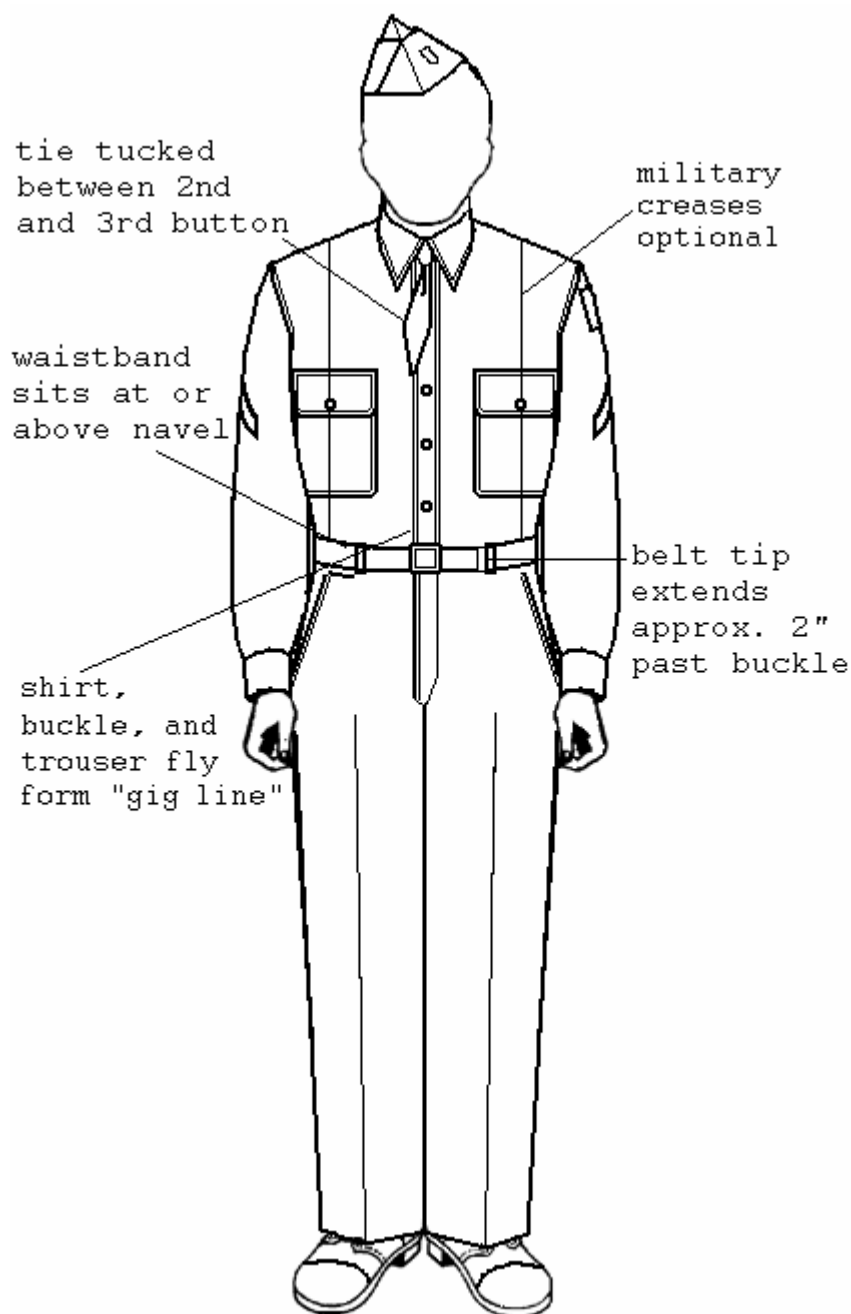


Fig. 7: Typical Class B or C Service Uniform

Manner of wear and insignia:

The Class B uniform is essentially the Class A without the jacket. The summer version, or Class C ("suntans") is simply the khaki trousers, shirt and cap. Typical insignia include those worn on the Class A version, except that the US and branch disks were not authorized. (This was a uniform practice that was suspended in 1940 and resumed in the post-WWII era.) Wear of service stripes and overseas bars was authorized, but rarely seen before the end of hostilities. Officers wear rank on the right collar and branch insignia on the left when the jacket is not worn (see *The Officers' Guide* for placement).

**WEAR OF INSIGNIA**

Uniform regulations were originally rather loose as to exact placement of most insignia on uniforms during WWII but gradually became more exact. However, these were observed and enforced to varying degrees. Below are examples of the *regulation* placement of enlisted insignia.

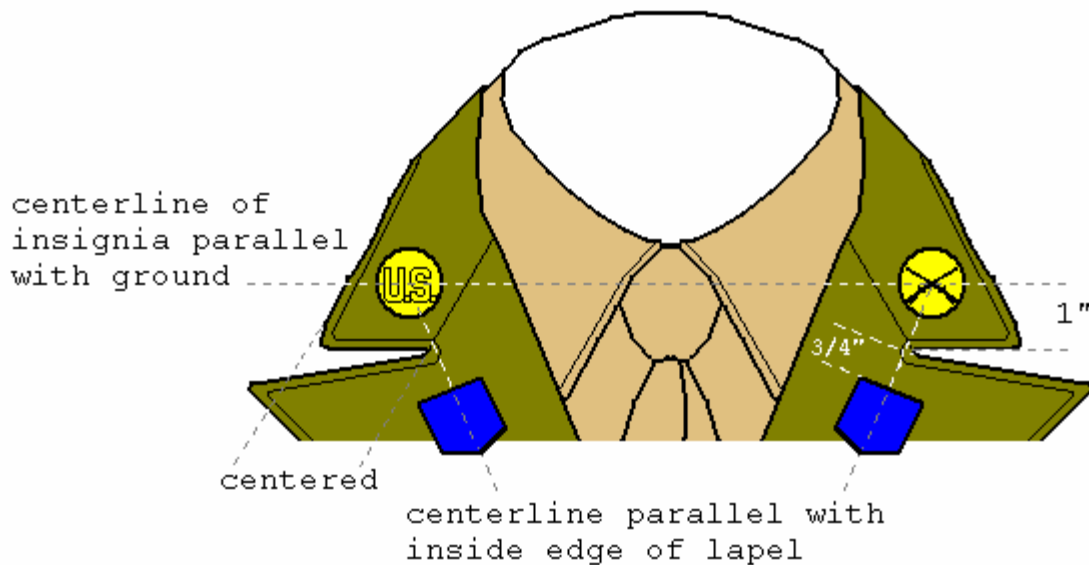


Fig. 8: Wear of U.S., Arm or Service, and Distinguishing Insignia

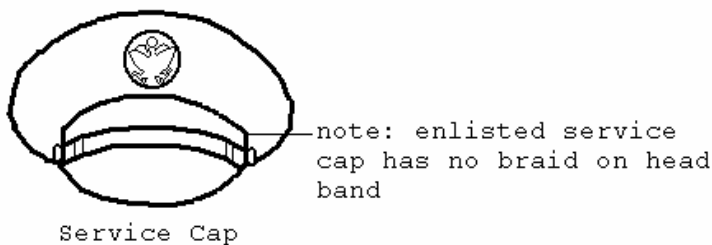
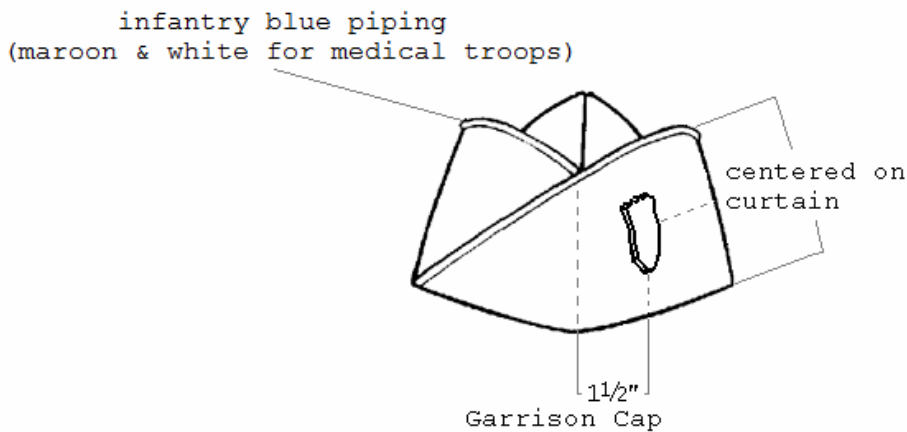


Fig. 9: Hat & Cap Insignia



## COMBAT & FIELD UNIFORMS

Uniform and equipment requirements have been divided into tiered levels as a guide of what to buy in what order. The underlying concept is to get the essential items for authentic participation, then add items for greater depth of impression and comfort.

A separate uniform for field and dress use is desirable, as field use will result in dirt, mud and often tears to the uniform, creating challenges to presenting a neat appearance when a Class A uniform is required.

The Levels as presented are suggested guidelines of what to get first. Only Level 1 is a minimum requirement for continued membership.

### Level 1

This is the basic uniform and equipment list for participation at events.

1	Canteen, M-1910	1 pr.	Shoes, Service <sup>2</sup>
1	Cover, Canteen	2 pr.	Socks, Wool, Light
1	Cup, Canteen	1	Shirt, Wool, OD (for field use)
1	Cartridge Belt, Dismounted, M-1928	1	Trouser, Wool, OD (for field use)
1	Pouch, First Aid Packet, M-1942	1	Belt, Web, Waist
1	Blanket, Wool, OD	1	Buckle, Web Belt
1	Shelter w/ 2 Ropes, 2 Supports & 10 Stakes (complete tent)	1 pr.	Leggings, M-1938
1	Entrenching Tool, M1943 OR Entrenching Tool, M1910	1	Cap, Garrison, Wool, OD
1	Cover, Entrenching Tool	1	Jacket, Field, M-1941
1	Helmet w/ Liner, M1, complete	1	Carrier, M6 (for M3 Lightweight Gasmask)
2	Undershirts, Cotton <sup>1</sup>		

<sup>2</sup> Smooth cap-toe or rough-out style

<sup>1</sup> Undershirt, Cotton - OD tank tops were by far the most common, secondly *approved* white t-shirts.

### Level 2

This level completes the basic Rifleman impression, and permits a “late” impression.

1	Pack, M1928 (complete)	1	Shirt, Wool, OD (for dress use)
1	Cap, Knit	1	Trouser, Wool, OD (for dress use)
2	Tags, Identification	1	Jacket, Herringbone Twill
1	Mess kit	1	Trouser, Herringbone Twill
1	Knife	1	Raincoat, Dismounted
1	Fork	1	Necktie
1	Spoon	1	Bag, Duffle OR
1	Rifle, M1		Bag, Barracks
1	Sling, Rifle	1	Jacket, M1943
1	Bayonet, 10” w/scabbard	1 pr.	Gloves, Wool
1	Bandoleer		
1	Boots, Combat		

## Level 3

### Comfort and detailed impression items suggested for purchase.

1	Cleaning Tool, Rifle, M3	1	Sewing kit
1	Gasmask, Lightweight, M3	1	Jacket, M1944 (“Ike”) w/ insignia
1	Identification Card	1	Jacket, Service, M1928 w/ insignia
1	Paybook	1	Flashlight TL-122(A-C)
1	Shaving Kit/Hygiene Roll	1	Pick-mattock and carrier
1	Wristwatch, Gov’t Issue or Civilian		
2	Drawers, Cotton, OD		
1	Sleeping Bag, Wool		
1	Cover, Sleeping Bag		
1	Cot		
1	Sweater, Knit, Wool OR		
	Vest, Knit, wool		
1 set	Underclothing, Thermal		
1 pr.	Eyeglasses, Period (if required)		
1	Overcoat		
x	Appropriate War Department manuals		
x	WWII war department issue short novels or other reading material		
1	Gasmask, Assault, M5 w/M7 Carrier		
x	Appropriate personal items (period photos from ‘home,’ V-mail letters, or other letters from ‘home’)		
1	Shirt, Cotton, Khaki, EM		
1 pr.	Trousers, Cotton, Khaki		
1 pr.	Socks, Cotton, Khaki		
1	Cap, Garrison, Cotton, Khaki		
1	Cap, Service, Wool, OD, EM		
1	Cap, Service, Cotton, Khaki, EM		

### **Impression Guides**

For the purposes of this document, an “impression” is the combination of uniforms and equipment items by a member to represent a specific battle or time period as observed through original photographs and documentary sources.

The impressions and time periods below are important periods in the story of the 90<sup>th</sup>. Key battles with distinct uniform and equipment trends are associated with each of these time periods.

- D-Day (June 1944)
- Hedgerows & Hill 122 / Foret De Mont Castre (July 1944)
- The Breakout (August 1944)
- Crossing the Moselle (September – December 1944)
- The Saar & Bulge (December 1944 – January 1945)
- Four Rivers, Moselle, Rhine, Main, Werra (February 1945 – May 1945)

Each of the above impressions and is detailed in the separate Combat Impression Guide.

**GROOMING**

Soldiers during World War II generally followed prevailing early 1940s fashion in the area of personal grooming. Field Manual 21-100, the *Soldier's Handbook* exhorted soldiers to “keep your hair cut short and your fingernails clean.” Military regulations were fairly scanty on the subject, but photographic evidence shows that soldiers typically wore their hair in what we would today consider a medium-short tapered cut. Most men of the period also used a commercial hairdressing, such as Brylcreem, Vitalis or Kreml.

Additionally, facial hair was not worn except the occasional trimmed mustache; sideburns were kept short. 90th IDPG members are expected to keep their personal appearance within these guidelines. Here are some examples of typical military haircuts.



**NOTES**