



Enlisted Rank Structure through WWII

1905-1919, the designs and titles varied by branch and there were 45 different insignia descriptions in specification 760, dated 31 May 1905, with different colors for different branches. General Order No. 169 dated 14 August 1907 created a wide variety of insignia. Specific pay grades were not yet in use by the Army and their pay rate was based on title. The pay scale approved in 1908 ranged from \$13 for a private in the engineers to \$75 for a Master Signal Electrician. The system identified the job assignment of the individual, e.g., cooks, mechanics, etc. By the end of World War I, there were 128 different insignia designs in the supply system.

Prior to 1919, the insignia of private first class consisted of the insignia of the branch of service without any arcs or chevrons. The Secretary of War approved "an arc of one bar" for privates first class on 22 July 1919.

The number of insignia was reduced to seven and six pay grades were established. War Department Circular No. 303, dated 5 August 1920, stated the chevrons would be worn on the left sleeve, point up, and to be made of olive drab material on a background of dark blue. The designs and titles were as follows:

Master Sergeant (First Grade) Three chevrons and an arc of three bars, the upper bar of arc forming



a tie to the lower chevron:

Technical Sergeant (Second Grade) Three chevrons and an arc of two bars, the upper bar of arc



forming a tie to the lower chevron:

First Sergeant (Second Grade) Three chevrons and an arc of two bars, the upper bar of arc forming a





tie to the lower chevron. In the angle between lower chevron and upper bar a lozenge:


Staff Sergeant (Third Grade) Three chevrons and an arc of one bar, forming a tie to the lower



chevron:

Sergeant (Fourth Grade) Three chevrons: 

Corporal (Fifth Grade) Two chevrons: 

Privates First Class (Sixth Grade) One chevron: 

Basic Private (7th Grade) No chevrons.

By 1942, The grades of Technician in the third, fourth and fifth grades were added by War Department Circular No. 5, dated 8 January 1942. Change 1 to AR 600-35, dated 4 September 1942, and added a letter "T" to the formerly prescribed chevrons for grades three, four and five. The first sergeant was moved from the second grade to the first grade per Change 3, AR 600-35, dated 22 September 1942. This change described the first sergeant's chevron as - - Three chevrons and arc of three bars, the upper bar of arc forming a tie to the lower chevron. In the angle between lower chevrons and upper bar, a hollow lozenge. This change also included the material as khaki chevrons, arcs, T, and lozenge on dark blue cotton background or olive-drab wool chevrons, arcs, T, and lozenge on dark blue wool backgrounds.

Master Sergeant :  Grade 1

First Sergeant  Grade 1

Technical Sergeant  Grade 2

Staff Sergeant  Grade 3

Tech 3d Class  Grade 3

Sergeant  Grade 4

Tech 4th Class  Grade 4

Corporal  Grade 5

Tech 5th Class  Grade 5

Private First Class  Grade 6

Changes made by Department of the Army Circular No. 202, dated 7 July 1948, discontinued the Sergeant 4th grade and recruit was added as the 7th grade effective 1 August 1948. The new insignia was smaller (2 inches wide) and the colors changed. Combat insignia worn by combat personnel were gold color background with dark blue chevrons, arc and lozenge. Insignia worn by noncombat personnel were dark blue with gold color chevrons, arcs, and lozenge. The circular also deleted the Technicians effective 1 August 1948.