








A Visual Guide To: U.S. Army Air Forces Rank Insignia, World War II

Enlisted/Noncommissioned Officers, 1941

Seventh Grade	Sixth Grade	Fifth Grade	Fourth Grade	Third Grade	Second Grade		First Grade
no insignia							
<i>Private</i>	<i>Private First Class or Specialist*</i>	<i>Corporal</i>	<i>Sergeant</i>	<i>Staff Sergeant</i>	<i>Technical Sergeant</i>	<i>First Sergeant</i>	<i>Master Sergeant</i>
Pvt.	Pfc. / Spec.	Cpl.	Sgt.	S/Sgt.	T/Sgt.	1st Sgt.	M/Sgt.

The Army Air Forces (USAAF or AAF) was preceded by the Army Air Corps (1926-1941) and succeeded by the United States Air Force (1947 - present), and during World War II the Army Air Forces maintained the same rank insignia as the U.S. Army.











Following World War I, many enlisted titles and designations were disbanded and simplified into a seven-tier pay grade with eight ranks. Here the progression of ranks is shown from left to right. *War Department Circular No. 303*, dated 5 August 1920 stated that chevron insignia was to be worn on the left sleeve, point up, and to be olive drab on a background of dark blue.

*Insignia showing a single chevron with 1 to 6 rockers beneath were “unauthorized” Specialist insignia, but did appear and denoted a skill and pay level within the sixth grade.

In 1942, *War Department Circular No. 5*, dated 8 January 1942, added Technician, Grades 5, 4, and 3, which replaced the Specialist designation. These designations were in the same pay grades as Corporal, Sergeant, and Staff Sergeant respectively. Updates were made to the insignia later that year, adding the “T” below the chevrons (*Change 1 to AR 600-5, dated 4 September 1942*). The rank of First Sergeant was moved from the second to first grade, and an additional rocker was added to the insignia to reflect the grade (*Change 3 to AR 600-5, dated 22 September 1942*). *Change 3* also indicated that the colors should be either khaki or olive drab on dark blue.


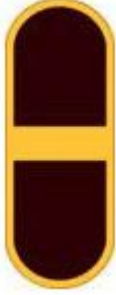
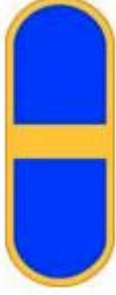

A Visual Guide To: U.S. Army Air Forces Rank Insignia, World War II

Enlisted/Noncommissioned Officers, 1942 - 1947

Seventh Grade	Sixth Grade	Fifth Grade	Fourth Grade	Third Grade	Second Grade	First Grade	
no insignia							
<i>Private</i>	<i>Private First Class</i>	<i>Corporal</i>	<i>Sergeant</i>	<i>Staff Sergeant</i>	<i>Technical Sergeant</i>	<i>First Sergeant</i>	<i>Master Sergeant</i>
Pvt.	Pfc.	Cpl.	Sgt.	S/Sgt.	T/Sgt.	1st Sgt.	M/Sgt.
							
		<i>Technician, 5th Class</i>	<i>Technician, 4th Class</i>	<i>Technician, 3rd Class</i>			
		T/5 or Tec5	T/4 or Tec4	T/3 or Tec3			

A Visual Guide To: U.S. Army Air Forces Rank Insignia, World War II

Warrant Officers, 1941 - 1947







 The Eagle Rising	Junior Grade		Senior Grade
	<i>Warrant Officer</i>	<i>Flight Officer</i>	<i>Chief Warrant Officer</i>
	U.S. Army	U.S. Army Air Forces, 1942 - 1945	U.S. Army
			
	WO or WOJG	FO or FLT O	CWO






On 21 August 1941, An act of Congress (*Pub. L. 77-230*) created two grades of Warrant Officer for the U.S. Army - Chief Warrant Officer and Warrant Officer, junior grade. The rank of Warrant Officer is higher than that of NCOs and lower than that of commissioned officers. A Warrant Officer is not commissioned, but is extended that designation through warrant, while a Chief Warrant Officer is commissioned by the President of the United States. On 8 July 1942, Congress created the rank of Flight Officer for the U.S. Army Air Forces or Army Air Corps (*Pub. L. 77-658*). A Flight Officer was equal to that of a Warrant Officer, and was only active for three years, being abolished in 1945.

The insignia of the Warrant Officer was authorized in 1942 (*Change 1 to AR 600-35, dated 4 September 1942 and War Department Circular 366, dated 7 November 1942*). The insignia was to be a gold bar $\frac{3}{8}$ inch wide and 1 inch long, with rounded edges and brown enamel (blue enamel for the Flight Officer). Junior grade officers' bars had a gold latitudinal center stripe $\frac{1}{8}$ inch wide, while Chief Warrant Officers bars had a gold longitudinal center stripe $\frac{1}{8}$ inch wide. The *Eagle Rising* was the insignia symbol of the Warrant Officer branch from May 1921 until July 2004, when Warrant Officers were integrated into the Army Officers Branch. The eagle was adapted from the great seal of the United States.

A Visual Guide To: U.S. Army Air Forces Rank Insignia, World War II

Officers, 1941 - 1947

Company Grade Officers			Field Grade Officers		
O-1	O-2	O-3	O-4	O-5	O-6
					
<i>Second Lieutenant</i>	<i>First Lieutenant</i>	<i>Captain</i>	<i>Major</i>	<i>Lieutenant Colonel</i>	<i>Colonel</i>
2LT	1LT	CPT	MAJ	LTC	COL

General Grade Officers				
O-7	O-8	O-9	O-10	
				
<i>Brigadier General</i>	<i>Major General</i>	<i>Lieutenant General</i>	<i>General</i>	<i>General of the Army</i>
BG	MG	LTG	GEN	GEN*

*Created in December 1944, *General of the Army* is a rank reserved only for wartime. Only four individuals were conferred this rank during World War II: General George Marshall, General Douglas MacArthur, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, and General Henry H. Arnold. The rank was initially considered temporary, lasting only six months after wars' end, but was declared permanent by Congress on 23 March 1946 (*PUB. L. 79-333*).

A Visual Guide To: U.S. Army Air Forces Rank Insignia, World War II

Bibliography:

Fisher, Ernest L., *Guardians of the Republic: A History of the Noncommissioned Officer Corps of the U.S. Army*, Stackpole Books, 2009. *Google Books*, <https://books.google.com/books?id=w2VO6jrG1RYC&lpg=PP1&pg=PP1#v=onepage&q&f=false>

“History of U.S. Army Enlisted Ranks,” *The Institute of Heraldry*, Office of the Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Army, 21 October 2016, web archived, <https://web.archive.org/web/20161021103919/http://www.tioh.hqda.pentagon.mil/Catalog/HeraldryMulti.aspx?CategoryId=9168&grp=2&menu=Uniformed%20Services>

“Insignia of Grade - Warrant Officers,” *The Institute of Heraldry*, Office of the Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Army, 21 October 2016, web archived, <https://web.archive.org/web/20161021104006/http://www.tioh.hqda.pentagon.mil/Catalog/Heraldry.aspx?HeraldryId=15751&CategoryId=9186&grp=2&menu=Uniformed%20Services>

“Officer Rank Insignia- Origin,” *The Institute of Heraldry*, Office of the Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Army, 21 October 2016, web archived, <https://web.archive.org/web/20161021104050/http://www.tioh.hqda.pentagon.mil/Catalog/Heraldry.aspx?HeraldryId=15750&CategoryId=9171&grp=2&menu=Uniformed%20Services>

“Origin of the Eagle Rising,” *Warrant Officer Historical Foundation*, 7 November 2018, https://warrantofficerhistory.org/Origin_of_Eagle_Rising.htm

“The United States Military Rank Insignia,” *U.S. Department of Defense*, 7 November 2018, <https://dod.defense.gov/About/Insignias/>

United States, Congress. An Act to Strengthen the National Defense By Creating The Grade of Chief Warrant Officer in the Army, And For Other Purposes. Public Law 77-230, Statutes at Large: 77th Congress, Session 1, Chapter 384, 21 August 1941. *The Law Library of Congress*, web, <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/statutes-at-large/77th-congress.php>

United States, Congress. An Act to Create the Title of Flight Officer in the Army Air Forces, And to Amend the Army Aviation Cadet Act, And For Other Purposes. Public Law 77-658, Statutes at Large: 77th Congress, Session 2, Chapter 493, 8 July 1942. *The Law Library of Congress*, web, <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/statutes-at-large/77th-congress.php>