

# Working with Military Museum Collections

## Military Insignia

### Nomenclature

#### Badge, Military

Communication Artifacts > Personal Symbols > Status Symbols

Military Badges are insignia worn on military uniforms. They are often used to identify what force an individual belongs to. Military Badges are commonly made of medal, as opposed to Military Patches which are made of cloth.

The Canadian Department of National Defence provides the following definition:

A badge is a distinctive sign, symbol or emblem used to visually identify a military organization and foster the pride and cohesiveness necessary for operational effectiveness. Official badges formally identify an individual branch, formation or unit. The primary badge of each organization is personally approved by the Governor- General as the Canadian Forces (CF) Commander-in-Chief. Supplementary badges, such as devices worn on collars or buttons, and secondary insignia used to identify personal rank, qualifications and skills, are approved by the Inspector of CF Colours and Badges on behalf of the Chief of the Defence Staff.

**Hold on a minute, “Badge, Cap” is in my nomenclature book, why can I not use that?**

Badge, Military and Badge, Cap are both listed as tertiary terms under Insignia > Badge, Insignia. As both terms are on the same level, we use the more specific one, which in this case is Badge, Military. The common name for the badge, whether it be Cap Badge, Collar Badge, or Shoulder Title, can be entered into the Alternative Names field.

#### Patch, Military

Communication Artifacts > Personal Symbols > Status Symbols

Military patches are commonly made of cloth, made to be affixed to a military uniform. Following the First World War, soldiers had both a service and a dress uniform. Badges continued to be worn on dress uniforms, but some were also made as patches, to serve the same role on service uniforms. An example of this is a “CANADA” shoulder flash. Other patches have roles only as a patch, and have no badge equivalent. An example of this is trade patches.

## Definitions

**Cap Badge** – Cap badges are worn on an individual’s uniform cap. They are commonly used to denote the wearer’s military unit.

**Collar Badge** – Collar badges come in pairs. They are worn on the collar of a uniform, to denote the wearer’s military unit.

**Shoulder Title** – Pair of insignia worn on either shoulder to identify which unit a soldier belonged to. This could be as broad as Canada, or more specialized such as a specific regiment. On dress uniforms, shoulder titles are commonly metal badges, whereas on service uniforms they are commonly flashes.

**Shoulder Flash** - Pair of patches worn on either shoulder to identify which unit a soldier belonged to.

## Numbering

Shoulder titles, collar badges, and other badges made to be worn in pairs:

Use a & b designation as you would for a pair of shoes.

i.e. 2017.1.1a

2017.1.1b

## Resources

Rank Insignia, Canadian Army (1970 – present)

<http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/honours-history-badges-insignia/rank-army.page>

Rank Insignia Poster, Canadian Forces (1970 – present)

[http://www.forces.gc.ca/assets/FORCES\\_Internet/docs/en/honours-history-badges-colours-flags/insignia-poster.pdf](http://www.forces.gc.ca/assets/FORCES_Internet/docs/en/honours-history-badges-colours-flags/insignia-poster.pdf)

Badge Identification, Canadian Military (1970 – present)

<http://www.cmp-cpm.forces.gc.ca/dhh-dhp/gal/bad-ins/index-eng.asp>

Directorate of History and Heritage, Canadian Forces

<http://www.cmp-cpm.forces.gc.ca/dhh-dhp/gal/bad-ins/index-eng.asp>

## Medals

### Nomenclature

#### Medal

Communication Artifacts > Personal Symbols > Achievement Symbols

A military medal is awarded to an individual who meets outlined criteria. Full size medals are made to be worn on the dress uniform.

**But wait! If I call this just a medal will it not get mixed up with other awards?**

This is an instance where the Object Type field can be used. You can enter “Military” as the object type.

### Medal - Obverse



2013.09.15, The Army Museum

### Medal - Reverse



**Obverse** – The front-facing side of the medal. This typically has the face of the monarch.

**Reverse** – The side of the medal facing the wearer. This side typically has the name of the medal.

**Edge** – Up to and including the First World War, the name and military unit of the individual would have been engraved along the edge of the medal. The same is true with the Korean War.

**Ribbon** – each medal has a distinctive ribbon. These ribbons are how the medal is mounted.

**Clasps** – Bars that stack horizontally over the medal, on the ribbon. Clasps are used to signify that a medal has been awarded numerous times (i.e. instead of issuing a second medal, a clasp is added to the original medal). Clasps are often used for campaign medals, to signify different battles the individual served in.

### Bar, Ribbon

Communication Artifacts > Personal Symbols > Achievement Symbols

A ribbon bar is a different representation of an individual's medals. Ribbon bars have the corresponding ribbon to the medals an individual has received. Ribbon bars are made to be worn on undress uniforms. Metal rosettes on ribbons represent the same thing as a clasp.



Signifies a clasp

2016.40.09, The Army Museum

## Medal, Commemorative

Communication Artifacts > Documentary Artifacts > Memorabilia

Commemorative medals include medals awarded to a service personnel's family. An example is a First World War Commemorative Plaque, commonly known as a death penny.

## Notes

- Canada adopted its own honours and awards system in the 1970s.
- Military orders are owned by the Sovereign, therefore Canadian medals are the same as British.
- Medals all have proper names.
- Ribbons are unique to each specific type of medal. They also correspond to those worn on ribbon bars, commonly worn on un-dress uniforms.
- Miniatures of medals worn on mess dress were not issued but had to be bought by the individual.
- It was always the responsibility of the individual to have their medals mounted (attached to a broach bar).
- Official medals awarded by the country are worn on the left breast. Medals given by associations such as legions are worn on the right breast.
- There is precedence for the order in which medals are to be worn. If you are facing an individual wearing their medals, those of highest priority would be on the left. Just like reading a book left to right, medals can be "read" left to right.
- Medals are associated with post-nominal letters. They too have an order of precedence
- Medals differ by rank (i.e. the medals awarded to officers were different than those for enlisted men)
- Ribbons on medals were replaced when they wore out.

## Resources

Medal Identification, Descriptions, and Qualifications (1866 - onwards)

<http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/medals-decorations>

Personnel Records of the First World War

<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/personnel-records/Pages/search.aspx>