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Identification

IDENTIFICATION (PERSONNEL)

A Working Bibliography of MHI Sources

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GENERAL SOURCES

U.S. Army Center of Military History. "Personal Identification System, United States Army: 'Tag' and 'Number.'" Photocopy of type-written "Fact Sheet," Aug 1971. 6 p. Bibliography File-Identification.

IDENTIFICATION TAG

Along with the mass armies and mass casualties of modern warfare came the need for accurate individual identification. During the Civil War, 1861-65, often considered the first modern war, soldiers of both sides improvised their own various means of identification in case of battlefield injury or death. Engraved pins and disks could be purchased from accommodating local entrepreneurs. Such private practices continued into the Spanish-American War (1898) and into the early years of the 20th century, when an official policy emerged. In 1906, the US Army authorized personal identification tags (the Navy waited until 1917). Aluminum half-dollar size discs, stamped with name, rank and unit, became part of the field uniform. During WWI, a numbering system began and each soldier's serial number then went on the tag. Modifications of tag and its information have occurred since that time.

Bradock, Paul F. "Armed Forces Identification Tags." Military Collector & Historian (Winter 1972): pp. 112-14. Per.

_____. Dog Tags: A History of the American Military Identification Tag, 1861 to 2002. Chicora, PA: Mechling, 2003. 169 p. UC529.D64.B73.

- Cucolo, Ginger. Dog Tags: The History, Personal Stories, Cultural Impact, and Future of Military Identification. United States: Allen House, 2011. 324 p. UC529.D64.C73.
- Fisch, Robert W. Field Equipment of the Infantry, 1914-1945. Sykesville, MD: Greenberg, 1989. pp. 206-07. UD370.F57.
- Haydon, F. Stansbury. "Identification Disc for the Army, 1862." Journal of the American Military History Foundation (Spring 1939): pp. 61-63. Per.
- Lord, Francis A. "Federal Army Identification Discs of the Civil War." Military Collector & Historian (Mar 1952): pp. 7-9. Per.
- _____. They Fought for the Union. Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole, 1960. pp. 149, 275-76. E491.L89.
- Maier, Larry B., & Stahl, Joseph W. Identification Discs of Union Soldiers in the Civil War: A Complete Classification Guide and Illustrated History. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2008. 212 p. E491.M34.
- Mann, Robert W., Holland, Thomas D., & Maves, Robert C. "Three Scientists From the U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory Examine American Dog Tags Sold in Vietnam." Vietnam (Apr 2002): pp. 60-61. Per.
Conclude they are being manufactured as "tourist souvenirs"
- Mullins, Tim. "An Artilleryman's ID Disc: John Burbeck, N.H. Light Artillery." North South Trader's Civil War Vol. 28, No. 1 (2001): pp. 50-51. Per.
Basic biographical sketch of soldier, 1st NH Lt Arty, w/ images of disc found in central Virginia.
- Ritter, Ben. "Each Soldier to Wear a Tag." Military Collector & Historian (Winter 2009): p. 263. Per.
Article form 27 Apr 1898 Winchester (VA) Times, p. 3 col. 6.
- Stahl, Joseph W. "Union Identification Discs." Blue & Gray Vol. 25, No. 6 (2009): pp. 27-30. Per.
- Thomas, R.S. "Memorandum for Sgt. Schmitt, AWC Library," 30 May 1944. 1 p. Bibliography File-Identification.
- U.S. Army. American Expeditionary Forces. General Order 21, dated 13 Aug 1917. Sec VI (pp. 2-3). MilPub-GOss
- U.S. Army. Dept of Arizona. Annual Report of Brigadier General George Crook, 1883. p. 2. UA27A6A2 & Bibliography File-Identification.
Mentions that he ordered all male Indians to be numbered and "tagged."

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U.S. Dept of Army. Identification Tags: Special Regulations 600-210-5, dated Mar 1949. 2 p. MilPub-SR.

And succeeding eds, Nov 1949 (2 p.) & Jun 1952 (2 p.).

_____. Identification Cards, Tags, and Badges: Army Regulations 606-5, dated Feb 1956. pp. 30-31. MilPub-AR.

And succeeding editions: Jul 1957, Jul 1959, Nov 1962, Feb 1967 and changes to 1976.

U.S. War Dept. General Order 204, dated 20 Dec 1906. 1 p. MilPub-GO.

_____. Regulations for the Army of the United States, 1913. Para 491 & Change 58 (6 Jul 1917) and Change 70 (16 Mar 1918). MilPub-AR.

_____. Personnel: Prescribed Service Uniform: AR 600-35, dated Mar 1944. pp. 34-35. MilPub-AR.

See also:

-Actual tags of WWI & WWII vintage, Army Heritage Museum Collection.

IDENTIFICATION NUMBERS

The US system of assigning numbers to individuals began for enlisted men during WWI (Feb 1918) and to officers by 1924. Called at first "Army serial number," it became "service number" in 1954 and was replaced in 1969 by an individual's social security number. See:

Army Navy Journal (16 Feb 1918): p. 915. Per.

Enloe, Thomas A. "The Serial Number." Typescript carbon, Wash, DC (?), 1945-1946(?). 5 p. Bibliography File-Identification.

Informal account of systems in both world wars, along with anecdotal trivia.

"G.I. Joe's Serial Number." Army Navy Register (16 Dec 1944): p. 23. Per.

Concise explanation of WWII system.

Mitchell, Gary A. "Army Serial Numbers--A Neglected World War I Research Tool." Medal Collector (Oct 1984): pp. 18-22. Photocopy in Bibliography File-Identification.

Shoemaker, Randall. "What's Behind All Those Digits in Your SSN?" Army Times (Feb 1984): p. 16. Per & Bibliography File-Identification.

Thomas, R.S. Photocopy of typescript memo to AWC Library, 30 May 1944. 1 p. Bibliography File-Identification.

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U.S. Dept of Army. Service Numbers: AR 600-302, dated Dec 1954. 6 p. With 3 changes, 6 p. MilPub-AR.

And superseding edition of 31 Jul 1961, (4 p.) w/1 change (1 p.); superseded by AR 600-2, Mar 1962.

_____. Name, Service Number, and Birth Data: AR 600-2, dated Mar 1962. 7 p. With 4 changes, 7 p. MilPub-AR.

And superseding editions: 5 Jun 1969 (12 p.)--which authorized social security number; 16 Apr 1973 (11 p.); and 1 May 1983 (4 p.).

U.S. War Dept. Army Serial Numbers: AR 615-30, dated Jul 1921. 2 p. MilPub-AR.

And superseding editions: 12 Feb 1942 (3 p.) with 2 changes (2 p.); 17 Jul 1947 (2 p.) with 2 changes (2 p.); and Service Numbers, 2 Sep 1949 (4 p.) with 4 changes (5 p.). Superseded by AR 600-203, 3 Dec 1954.

_____. Circular 120, Mar 1944. pp. 1-2. MilPub-Circ.

_____. Military Records: Name, Army Serial Number, and Birth Data: AR 345-1, dated Mar 1944. 6 p. MilPub-AR.

IDENTIFICATION CARDS (Sources listed chronologically)

U.S. War Dept. Preparation of Identification Cards: War Dept Pamphlet 20-9, dated Feb 1945. 6 p. MilPub-Pam.

U.S. Dept of Army. Special Regulations (SR), 1949-1956, MilPub-SR:

_____. Identification Card: SR 600-20, Mar 1949. 8 p.

General provisions for various categories of military and civilian personnel.

_____. Identification Cards for Individuals on Active Duty and for Protected Personnel: SR 600-210-21, Aug 1950. 4 p.

And succeeding edition of Oct 1951 (8 p.).

_____. Preparation of Identification Cards: SR 600-210-10, Aug 1950. 8 p.

Includes illustrations of cards, pp. 6-8. Also succeeding edition of Jan 1953 (10 p.).

_____. Civilian Noncombatant's Certificate of Identification: SR 600-210-30, Jul 1950. 8 p.

And succeeding edition of Apr 1952 (6 p.).

_____. Civilian Photographic Identification Badges: SR 600-210-80, Feb 1951. 2 p.

And succeeding edition of 30 Nov 1953.

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- _____. Geneva Conventions Identification for Military and Protected Personnel: SR 600-210-25, Oct 1951. 3 p. With 2 changes.
- _____. Identification Cards for Retired Personnel: SR 600-210-22, Aug 1950. 3 p.
And succeeding editions, Nov 1950 (3 p.) and Jul 1954 (6 p.).
- _____. Privilege Identification Card: SR 600-210-65, Aug 1953. 5 p.
See also SR 135-241-10, Aug 1949, 6 p., on preparing IDs for civilian components.
- _____. Reserve Components: Identification Cards for Personnel: SR 135-241-5, Nov 1952. 4 p.
With 2 changes, 2 p.

All the above-cited were superseded by the following Army Regulation:

- U.S. Dept of Army. Identification Cards, Tags, and Badges. AR 606-5, dated Feb 1956. 32 p.
With 3 changes, 9 p. MilPub-AR.
And superseding editions: 19 Jul 1957 (34 p.), 8 Jul 1959 (41 p.), 15 Nov 1962 (27 p.),
15 Feb 1967 (32 p.), with 11 changes to 1976 (ca 50 p.).

FOREIGN IDENTIFICATION

- Fisch, Robert W. Field Equipment of the Infantry, 1914-1945. Sykesville, MD: Greenberg, 1989.
pp. 206-07. UD370.F57.
Photos & concise info from 20 nations.
- U.S. Army. Southwest Pacific Area. Allied Translator and Interpreter Sec. The Exploitation of Japanese Documents. ATIS Pub No 6, 14 Dec 1944. pp. 28, 30-33. D810.S7.E96.
- U.S. War Dept. Mil Intell Div. The Exploitation of German Documents. Wash, DC: War Dept, MID. pp. 8-23. UB252.31.E96.
- Williamson, Gordon. "Ihr Papieren, Bitte!" Military Illustrated (Jun 1992): pp. 19-22. Per.
German military ID system, WWII: The Soldbuch & Wehrpass.

MISCELLANEOUS

Greenleaf, Charles R. "Personal Identity in the Recognition of Deserters." Journal of the Military Service Institute of the US (Nov 1889): pp. 561-75. Per.

Discusses tattoos, photos, fingerprints & precise body measurements.

Lane, Larry. "No More Unknowns." Soldiers (Jul 1992): pp. 24-25. Per.

Using DNA to identify dead.

U.S. Dept of Army. Preparation of Fingerprint Record: SR 11, Aug 1951. 6 p. MilPub-SR.

Superseded by AR 606-15, Nov 1960.

Whittle, C.L. "Tattooing the Soldier." Infantry Journal (Sep/Oct 1934): p. 360. Per.

Seriously suggests at least four tattoos of each serial number on "least vulnerable" parts of the body.

Willoughby, C.A. "Identification of German Prisoners of War." Infantry Journal (Sep 1918):

pp. 181-202. Per

ID by unit. WWI.

Wilson, Gerald C. "Simple Little Things." Soldiers (Apr 1990): pp. 50-52. Per.

Overview w/illustrations.

See also:

-Vegetius, Military Institutions (U101.V4, p. 17), mentions an apparent branding mark for Roman soldiers.