

Heer metal strap & board numeric devices

Description

Members of the German Army wore unit designators on their shoulder straps and boards. While various letters were also used, numbers were the most common designator. Enlisted men and some junior NCOs used embroidered devices, while officers and most NCOs used metal cyphers - gold colored for officers and silver or leichtmetall for NCOs. Numbers were used long before the Third Reich came into existence. As such, a variety of sizes and styles are encountered, as the earlier types continued to be worn. The pre-Nazi era devices had a decidedly different style, both in the basic design and pattern on the face. Third Reich era devices were of a simpler design and had simple horizontal lines across the face. They were produced in two sizes, roughly 3/4" and 1/2" tall. Regardless of the materials used, the devices are hollow-back and were manufactured by stamping. Prong length, width, type of wire used (round or flat), and the end configuration differ greatly. In general (note that numerous exceptions exist), the larger Third Reich devices will have flat prongs with angle cut ends, while the smaller ones use round pointed wire or narrow flat wire with blunt ends. The wire is usually either the same material used for the device or is brass, and will be soldered on.



Early Imperial pattern with diagonal rows



Another early pattern not commonly encountered



Later early pattern with raised dots



Third Reich pattern with simple horizontal lines



Comparison of the two standard sizes, roughly 3/4" and 1/2" tall



Imperial devices had round pointed prongs set into a socket-type fitting



Larger TR devices usually had soldered on flat prongs with angle cut ends



Smaller devices most commonly used round pointed or flat blunt end prongs

Prepared by Dave Suter - 07/24/05

For those interested, a more detailed article covering all aspects of German shoulder boards and straps can be found at http://www.wehrmacht-awards.com/uniforms_firearms/uniforms/shoulder_boards/index.htm