

Designing military uniforms/in- signias

24/03/2022

Considerations

Easily distinguishable but obviously related

It is important that each 'type' is visually connected, often with similar design tropes, or with a common logo/colours/etc. However, each rank still needs to be quickly and correctly identifiable. This is often achieved by adding extra lines or stars around the insignia.

As seen in the example in the post, it is clear that the insignias with more lines are more important than those with fewer lines. However, after a while these could start to blend together.

Space usage/size

As seen with the bottom row of the post, 5 stars (likely) became too long or too difficult to see from a certain angle/distance. This meant they used a different structure, but the basic concept remained.

Colour/Material

Gold > Silver > Bronze (typically) This is a good point to consider how your societies view colour. An army may wish to use a colour that the 'opposing' armies fear, for example. Or one that is viewed as rare and high status, like blue and purple used to be before dyes were mass manufactured.

This also ties in with the material. Gold/Silver/Bronze is easy with metal, where as other colours are easier with cloth or other fabrics. Consider the resources the societies have access too, and consider using rarer/higher status materials for higher ranks. Don't go too far, as they are still going to be in battle, after all, so using a super-rare gemstone might be highly respected, it will quickly become expensive.

There (obviously) needs to be a high contrast, so they are easier to distinguish.

Purpose

The whole purpose of a uniform is to help identify (both who you are, and who's side you're on). They should be unique to each group. They should be patriotic, using colours or symbols, or design tropes common in that region. They should be tidy and professional, to give the impression of a grand, powerful army.

Example

These are my previous designs:

Badges

Field officers: Officer, Senior Officer, Superintendent, Chief Superintendent, and Commissioner.

These were made of silver and pinned into the uniforms of the officers' jackets.



Field detectives: Assistant Detective, Detective, Chief Detective.

These were made of fabric and stitched into the uniforms of the officers' jackets. They were also seen in ID's and other documents, as often they would wear plain clothes (or at least jackets/other non-uniform clothing).



Non-field officers: Deputy Chief of Police, Assistant Chief of Police, Chief of Police.

These were made of fabric and were attached on their shirts between the collar bone and the shoulder, running parallel.



Bands

Optionally, you could opt-in for a 'band' as well (field officers only). These were made of fabric and were wrapped around the forearm. (To help identify officers when they took their jackets off.)



Notes

- They all feature the same symbol: the Japanese Government Seal.
- The stars/stripes/diamonds clearly indicate rank.
- They are visible and not too indistinguishable, although maybe not from a distance.
- The design is easily copyable, so they can be used on clothing, hats, IDs, weapons, etc.

Other resources

- [Lists of military ranks](#) (Wikipedia)
- [Military rank](#) (Wikipedia)
- [Fictional military personnel by rank](#) (Wikipedia)
- [Military fiction](#) (Wikipedia)
- [This reddit discusion on uniform design](#)
- [Star Wars imperial military uniform design](#)
- [This World Anvil blog on fantasy outfit design](#)
- [Roll for Fantasy - Army creation](#)
- [TVTropes - Hollywood Military uniform](#). This page lists loads of cool examples
- [Fantasy Fiction - Designing a military or army](#)