C. J. YATCAK

CIVIL WAR CORPS BADGES

FIRST
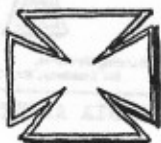
SECOND

THIRD

3RD CORPS - ART. BRIGD.

FOURTH

FIFTH

SIXTH

SEVENTH

EIGHT

NINTH

TENTH

ELEVENTH

TWELFTH

THIRTEENTH
NO BADGE AUTHORIZED

FOURTEENTH

FIFTEENTH

SIXTEENTH

SEVENTEENTH

EIGHTEENTH

NINETEENTH

TWENTIETH
(11TH & 12TH COMBINED)

TWENTY-FIRST
NO BADGE AUTHORIZED

TWENTY-SECOND

TWENTY-THIRD

TWENTY-FOURTH

TWENTY-FIFTH

WILSON'S CAVALRY CORPS

SIGNAL CORPS

ENGINEER CORPS & MINERS

SHERIDAN'S CAVALRY CORPS

HANCOCK'S VETERAN CORPS

ARMY OF WEST VIRGINI

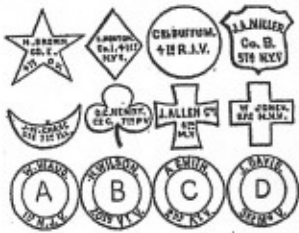**COLORS OF THE DIVISONS:**

FIRST DIVISON = RED	SECOND DIVISON = WHITE	THIRD DIVISON = BLUE
FOURTH DIVISON = GREEN	FIFTH DIVISON = ORANGE	

A Means of Identification, An Uplift of Unit Morale, And a Guard Against Straggling...

Federal field armies were composed of corps commanded by major generals.   At full strength a corps numbered 25,000 men, but corps in the Army of the Potomac in 1863 numbered, on the average, only 16,000 men, while some were smaller. In the Army of the Potomac each corps headquarters was designated by a headquarters flag.

In the West, there was no corps organization until October, 1862.   At that time General Rosecrans established a different system of corps flags, but provisions regarding flags to designate corps headquarters were not generally adopted.

Eventually corps badges were worn proudly by troops in all theaters of war.   To increase esprit and for a ready recognition of corps and divisions in the several armies, a system of badges for the various corps was adopted.   The idea originated with General Philip Kearny, who had the soldiers of his division wear a red patch to distinguish them from other troops.   The idea of corps badges to be worn throughout the Army of the Potomac later was suggested to Hooker by his chief of staff, General Daniel Butterfield, who devised the badges in detail.

Butterfield's biographer tells how different badges came to be selected: "The design for the I Army Corps was a disc, the first thing thought of."   A patch or lozenge was reserved for the III Army Corps, as Kearny's division was in that corps.   For the II Army Corps the trefoil was chosen, as a sort of shamrock, there being many troops of Irish origin in that corps.

The order for the first corps badges (Army of the Potomac, March 21, 1863) was prompted by the need of ready recognition of corps and divisions to prevent injustice by reports of straggling and misconduct through mistakes as to identification of their organizations.

The idea of corps badges was taken to the Western armies by the transfer of the XI and XII Army Corps from the Army of the Potomac to Tennessee in 1863.   When these corps arrived at Chattanooga they were wearing their corps badges.   Rivalry between them and the Western corps was strong and the contrast in neatness of dress between the two sections was marked. One of the Easterners asked an Irishman of the Western troops what his corps badge was.   The Westerner slapped his cartridge box and replied: "This is my corps badge."   As a result of this incident, his unit, the XV Army Corps, adopted the cartridge box with the words "Forty Rounds" as their corps badge. Only two (XIII and XXI) of the 25 corps failed to adopt badges in the Federal Army.

The badges, of cloth or metal, were worn either on cap or left side of the hat.   Although the Chief Quartermaster had been directed to supply corps badges to all individuals assigned to corps, there appears to have been no regular govern-

ment issue of these badges.   The men bought them from sutlers or made them from the lining of their overcoats.   Corps emblems were soon used everywhere-- being painted on ambulances, wagons, and other material, as well as being worn by the men. Most of the metal badges were sold by sutlers.   In addition to brass and tin, silver badges, engraved with the soldier's name, company, and regiment were popular.   These fancy badges were widely advertised in HARPER'S WEEKLY, LESLIE'S, and THE ARMY and NAVY JOURNAL.   One soldier thought his corps badge had the power to protect him from all enemy missiles.   That man, a private in the 14th New Hampshire Infantry of the XIX Army Corps, ironically enough was killed in his regiment's first battle.

A rather unusual use of the corps emblem was that made by men of the V Army Corps, who delighted in showing the enemy that their corps had destroyed part of the Weldon Railroad.   In August, 1864, these soldiers heated railroad rails, then twisted one rail over another, thus forming a Maltese cross, their corps badge.   However, men of the II Corps, also active in the rail destruction, could hardly do this as the rails could not be twisted into the shape of the trefoil.

In the last two years of the war Federal corps badges were well known to friend and foe alike.   When Confederate prisoners were brought into the lines of the 2d Division of the II Corps at Bristoe Station, saw the white trefoil of their captors, they recognized their old antagonists of Gettysburg and exclaimed: "Those damned white clubs again."

Sometimes corps badges were a disadvantage, especially to wounded men who, in some cases, were treated only at their own corps hospitals.   This happened to a I Army Corps soldier who sought treatment at an XI Corps field hospital at Gettysburg.   The soldier's corps badge identified him but the surgeon finally relented and gave him too-long delayed medical assistance.

A suggestion for a distinguishing badge for Regular officers was never acted upon due to the termination of the war.   However, the corps badges for the Volunteers, whether the emblems were of cloth, tin, brass, or silver, were extensively worn during the war.   These badges are very scarce today and most collectors consider themselves fortunate if they have even one.

Submitted by

Chester J. Yatcak
Curator, the Memorial Room

U.S. Cavalry Memorial Association
Midway City, CA.