10th Mountain Division Shoulder Insignia

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For the collector of military insignia there have been four distinct 10th Divisions. The WW I 10th Division. The WWII 10th Mountain Division. The Korean War era 10th Infantry Division. The current 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry)

10th Division WWI

The World War I 10th Division was activated on July 9, 1918 at Camp Funston, Fort Riley Kansas. The commanding General was Major General Leonard Wood. General Wood had previously commanded and trained the 89th Division at Camp Funston.

Division composition

Infantry: 19 brigade: 41, 69 Inf Regts, 29 MG Bn
20 Brigade: 20, 70 Inf Regts, 30 MG Bn
Artillery: 10 Brigade: 28, 29, 30 FA, 10 TM Btry
Division Troops: 28 MG Bn, 210 Eng, 210 Fld Sig Bn, Hq Trp
Division Trains: 10th Train HQ and MP, 10 Ammunition Tn,
10 Supply Tn, 10 Sanitary Train, 210 Engineer Train

Staring in July 1918 the training of the Division proceeded rapidly and by November the advance party of the Division had departed from Camp Mills, NY for Brest, France. The Division Trains and 210 Engineer Regiment had reached Camp Mills when the armistice was signed and the war ended on November 11, 1918. The Division was then demobilized without any of its units seeing combat..

#1 WW1 Shoulder Insignia

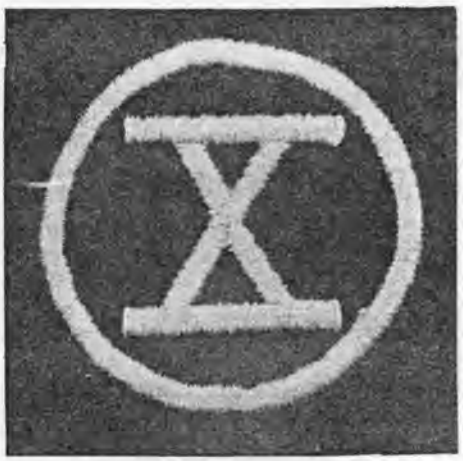
A shoulder insignia exists for the WWI 10th Division. Because the Division did not serve in the AEF, the insignia was not authorized. It consists of the Roman numeral X enclosed by a circle on a medium blue square. The numeral X and circle are in gold. The Roman numeral X represents the Divisions number. Gold represents the home of the cavalry at Fort Riley. The blue background is for Infantly.

World War II 10th Mountain Division

To meet the requirements of WWII the US Army ground forces activated 90 combat Divisions. These consisted of 67 Infantry Divisions, 16 Armored Divisions, 5 Airbome Divisions, 1 Cavalry Division, and one Mountain division. The 10th Light Division (Alpine) was activated at Camp Hale, Colorado on July 15, 1943. Prior to this, extensive mountain development and training had been conducted by the 87th Mountain Infantry Regiment at Ft Lewis Washington. The Division was organized as follows:

WWII Organization
Infantry: 85, 86, 87 Mountain Infantry Regiments
Artillery: 604, 605, 616 FA Bns (Pack Howitzer)
Combat Support: 10 Mtn AT Bn, 10 Mtn Cav Rec Tp.
126 Mtn Eng Bn, 110 Mtn Signal Co.
Administrative Support: 10 Mtn QM Bn, 710 Mtn Ord Co, 10 Mtn Med Bn, 10 Mtn MP Plt.

The initial organization of the Division included the 90th Infantry Regt. When the 87 Regt returned from the Aleutian Islands campaign it replaced the 90th. To train the Division it was necessary to in effect write the book as nothing existed in the way of training materials for mountain troops. Personnel were recruited from the National Ski Patrol and college ski clubs and teams. In addition people with skills in mountain climbing and pack aninal handling were recruited. The Division also was the test bed for a variety of vehicles for use in the mountains and snow. With this depth of talent training progressed rapidly in the Colorado mountains. High altitude, rugged terrain and harsh weather conditions took their toll on the personnel of the Division. In addition personnel were lost to various officer candidate schools. Small unit training was completed and the Division size exercises completed in March of 1944. To everyone's surprise rather than being sent overseas the Division was transferred to Camp Swift, Texas for further training on the plains of central Texas. This phase ended in November 1944 with the receipt of orders for the Division to proceed to Italy as part of the 5th Army.



The 86th Mountain Infantry was the first unit to leave with the remainder of the Division following. The Division left the country through Camp Patrick Henry, NorfoLk Virginia and arrived at the Port of Naples Italy. Being the first to arrive the 86th was the first to see combat and was given credit for the Rome - Arno campaign. The whole Division was assembled in Italy by mid January 1944.

The 5th Army plans for using the 10th Mountain Division involved three major assignments. The first was to seize key mountain peaks in the North Appenines needed to prepare for the major spring offensive. The second assignment would be to attack and break the German line in the Appenines and reach the Po River. The third objective would be to cross the Po River and proceed North to meet the American forces attacking South from Germany and Austria. It was expected that the 10's mountain training would be extensively used in these operations.

The first phase of these operations started on the night of February 19, 1944 when the 1st Bn of the 86th Infantry launched a night assault on Riva Ridge. The previous night patrols had marked out three trails that were used by the battalion to reach the summit. The Germans were taken by surprise and the top of the ridge cap-

tured. The following night a second assault was launched against Mt Belvedere by the 3rd Bn of the 85th Infantry. The attack on the adjacent Mt Gorgoesco was made by the 1st Bn 85th Infantry with 2nd Bn in support of both units. The 87th Infantry was used to attack the flanks of Mt Belvedere. This attack resulted in heavy fighting that extended over the following six days before the peak and surrounding area was secured. All the units involved were subject to repeated counter attacks as the Germans attempted to recover this key area. With their objectives secured the division settled into a defense line awaiting the upcoming spring offensive.

The 5th Army's spring offensive began on April 14, 1945. The 10th Division and the Brazilian Expeditionary Force of the IV Army Corps, spearheaded the attack. In a series of bloody battles the 10th captured a series of heavily defended mountains. Names such as Mt Pigna, Hill 913, Mt Matino and Mt Mosca represented savage battles against dug in German troops. The 10th broke out of the Appenines and a task force consisting of tank-infantry teams was ordered to continue the attack North to the Po River. The river was reached on April 21,1944. Wasting no time the river was crossed on April 23, 194S by the 1st Bn of the 87th Infantry with the remainder of the Division following. The German forces in North Italy were now split in half and in full retreat.

The final pursuit of the Germans began after the Po river crossing. A task force known as Task Force Darby was formed to pursue the Germans northward. The route for the 10th was up the shores of Lake Garda to the Brenner Pass. The Germans continued to fight tough rear guard actions until the final surrender on May 2, 1945. While its time in combat was short, the Division suffered over 4000 casualties in combat.

With the end of the war in Europe the 10th was chosen to be one of the divisions for the invasion of Japan. After a tour of occupation duty the 10th left Italy. The Division was to be reformed at Camp Carson Colorado. The end of the war in Asia found the Division in transit. Most units were sent to the closest station and demobilized. The Formal division deactivation took place at Camp Carson on November 30, 1945.

WWII shoulder insignia

(#2 Pando-Commando)

The first insignia used by the 10th Mountain Division at Camp Hale was a cartoon type design showing a Panda Bear on skis with an M1 rifle. This design was used on signs and on the Masthead of the Divisions newspaper. The railroad stop at Camp Hale was Pando, Colorado. The design became known as the Pando-Commando. As far as I can decerne the design was not made into a patch during WWII. The example shown was made by members of the Association of the 10th Mountain Division. The Institute of Heraldry refused to consider this design as the official patch because of its ban on cartoon type insignia

#3 WWII Shoulder Patch

The well known crossed bayonets shoulder patch of the 10th Division was approved on January 7, 1944. This design was not well liked by the troops of the 10th because it did not relate to the mountain training the division had received. To remedy this the Mountain tab was approved on November 22, 1944. The red crossed bayonets and blue background suggest Infantry. The crossed bayonets form the Roman numeral 10, the Division's number. The white outer shape of the patch is a gunpowder keg suggesting the latent power of the Division. The tab consists of the word Mountain in white on a blue tab.

#4 WWII version of the WW Patch

There exists a WWII fully embroidered version of the WWI patch. It was either made in the expectation it would be used by a newly activated division or for collectors. The use of the Roman Numeral X in both the WWI and WWII patches would indicate the I O H was aware of it existence.

#5 WWII Theater made patches

All three of the following patches were made in Italy during WWII. This first example matches the issue patch in size and color. The red sword and white border are hand embroidered on blue twill type material the in turn is backed by a wool OD backing that forms an edge. The bayonets and white keg are edged with a fine gold thread. The tab is European woven type with a backing of German or Italian wool uniform material.

#6 WWII Theater made Patch

This example is also the approximate size and shape of the issue patch. It is hand embroidered on a felt backing. The bayonets and edge of the keg are outlined with gold bullion thread. The tab is embroidered on blue felt with a gold bullion thread edge.

#7 WWII Theater made Patch

This example is slightly larger than the issue patch. It is hand embroidered using a silk thread. The device is in the correct colors. The bayonets and the keg are outlined in gold bullion thread. The Mountain tab is of European woven type with a backing of German or Italian uniform material.

1948-1958 Post WWII. Korean War and NATO Serice

The 10th Division was reactivated as part of the Regular Army on July 1, 1948 at Camp Funston, Fort Riley, Kansas as a Training Division. It consisted of an induction center, Three infantry training regiments the 85, 86 and 87 and various schools. It maintained this organization until October 1954 when it was selected as the first Division to rotate to Germany. Called Operation Gyroscope it was to change stations with the 1st Division in Germany. The Division received personnel and equipment from the 37th Division that was being retumed to Nationa1 Guard status. The Division left for Gennany in July 1955. The 1954 orgalization was as follows:

1954-1956 Organization

Infantry: 85, 86, 87 Infantry Regiments
Artillery: Division Artillery, 25, 35, 40, 85 Field Artillery Bns, 43
AAA Bn.
Combat Support: 41 Engineer Bn, 62 Medium Tank Bn., 10 Signal Bn., 10 Rcn Co.
Admin Support :10 QM Co., 10 Repl Co, 10 MP Co, 10 Medical Bn, 710 Ordnance Bn

1957 - 1958 Pentomic Oroanization

Infantry: 2/7, 2/10, 2/15, 2/29, 1/87 Inf.
Artillery 2/7, 2/9 Art
Combat Support: 41 Eng Bn, 3/7 Cav, 2/69 Armor,110 Sig Bn, 10 Avn C0
Admin Support: 10 QM Co, 10 Medical Bn, 30 Trans Bn, 710 Ordnance Bn, MP Co

The 10th remained in Germany as part of the US commitment to NATO until July of 1958. It was a component of the 7th Army, V Army Corps. It was in turn replaced by the 3rd Infantry Division. The 10th was sent to Ft Benning, Georgia where it was redesignated as the 2nd Infantry Division. During this period the Combat Arms Regimental System came into being and the 87th Infantry Regiment was the only one of the three original WW II Mountain Infantry Regiments to survive.

#8 1948-1958 Shoulder Dstch

The issue shoulder patch of the 1948-1958 period was the WWII patch without the Mountain Tab.

#9 Fort Riley Patches

These patches vary from the issue type. The bayonet grips are different and the edge of the keg thinner. They are made both as fully embroidered and embroidered on felt types. They were sold in the PX at Fort Riley.

#10 German made Patch

This fully embroidered patch is of German manufacture. The bayonets look more like Roman swords. The Mountain tab has a white border.

10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry)

The current 10th Mountain Division was activated on February 18, 1985 at Fort Drum New York. It was activated as a light infantry division. As of this date (November 1995) its organization is as follows:

Division headquarters: HHC 10 MD; HHC 1 Bde, 10 MD; HHC 2 Bde, 10 MD, HHB 10 MD Arty; HHC 10 MD Spt Comd; 10 MD Band; HHC Avn Bde 10 MD

Support Units: 41 Engineer Bn; 110 MI Bn; 10 MP Co; 10 Sig Bn; 10 Spt Bn; 210 Spt Bn; 710 Spt Bn,

Aviation Units: 2-25 Avn; 3-25 Avn; E-25 Avn; 3-17 Avn

Artillery: 3-62 ADA; 1-7 FA; E-7 FA; 2-7 FA

Infantly: 2-14 Inf; 2-22 Inf; 3-14 Inf; 1-22 Inf; 1-87 Inf; 2-87 Inf

All of the above units are stationed at Fort Drum, New York. Some unit designations will be changed in the near future as part of the downsizing of the Army to a 10 Division force. When the Division was activated in 1985 its 3rd Brigade was a round-out Brigade from the New York National Guard. In the current (1995) reorganization the 3rd Brigade will be a brigade of the 6th Infantry Division stationed in Alaska.

#11 German made metallic border

This German made patch has a silver metallic edge added to an issue patch.

The 10th mountain Division (II) had minimal participation in Operation Desert Storm. Operation Restore/ Continue Hope involved primarily infantry soldiers. The entire Division has been deployed to Haiti.

#13 Current merrowed edge patches

Current Issue Merrow edged color and subdued patches.

#12 Metallic thread natch.

This example of this period is this very nicely rnade product of the litde old Paldstan tailor shops. A made for collectors item.

#14 Insignia manufactured by the Association of the 10th Mountain Divisition

The final two insignia were manufactured and sold by the Association of the 10th Mountain Division for their members. Some of these have appeared in collector circles. The embroidered one piece patch is regulation size and color using silver metallic thread in pLace of white.. It is embroidered on black felt. The final patch is the official Insignia of the Association of the 10th Mountain Division. The example shown is worn as a Blazer patch. My thanks to Lt. Col. W. K. Emerson for taking the photographs used in this article.