

# **50<sup>th</sup> INTELLIGENCE SQUADRON**

**LINEAGE**

**STATIONS**

**ASSIGNMENTS**

**MISSION EQUIPMENT**

**COMMANDERS**

**HONORS**

**Service Streamers**

**Campaign Streamers**

**Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

**Decorations**

**EMBLEM**

**EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE**

**MOTTO**

**NICKNAME**

**CALL SIGN**

**OPERATIONS**

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Air Force Order of Battle

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Sources

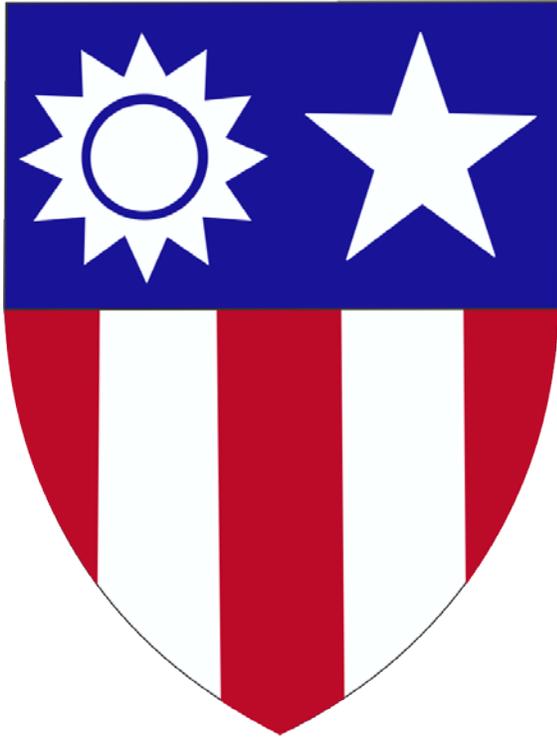
A Norman shield 2 1/4 inches (5.72 cm) wide and 3 inches (7.62 cm) high, of five alternating vertical red and white stripes; on a blue chief 1 1/4 inches (3.18 cm) deep a twelve-pointed Chinese sun and a five-pointed star within imaginary circles of 1 inch (2.54 cm) diameter, both white.

## **Symbolism**

The twelve-pointed “White Sun” is representative of China, the five-pointed white star is representative of the “Star of India,” while the red and white stripes and the blue upper portion of the shield represent the colors of the Flag of the United States.

## **Background**

The shoulder sleeve insignia was approved on 24 October 1944. Wear was extended to the personnel of the China Theater on 12 February 1945. The insignia was cancelled effective 31 May 1946.



The China Burma India Theater shoulder sleeve insignia is presented as a study in variations that exist for a given shoulder sleeve insignia. I do not claim that I show all existing variations. The United States Armed Forces, China Burma India Theater was established on March 4, 1942 to control American forces on the Asia mainland. The goal of the force was to assist American allies, particularly China, in containing Japanese expansion westward. The CBI Theater did not contain large numbers of U.S. combat troops, but posed logistical problems beyond any previously faced by the U.S. Army. From India to the interior of mainland China thousands of American soldiers ran railroads, built roads, provided medical care, flew cargo planes, trained Chinese troops, etc.

The shoulder sleeve insignia of the China Burma India Theater was approved November 13, 1944, but had seen unofficial use since 1942. It is interesting that a veteran I spoke to said that he never saw a CBI patch used in the field until he was getting ready to come home. Still the number of variations of the insignia is among the greatest of any shoulder sleeve insignia of the Second World War. Hand made bullion embroidered patches are particularly well represented.

### **Machine Embroidered U.S. Made**



**Machine Embroidered  
light blue ring in sun**



**Machine Embroidered  
thinner dark blue ring in sun**



**Machine Embroidered thinner  
width,  
wider light blue ring in sun**

Fully machine embroidered patches are generally made in the United States.

### **Cotton Hand Embroidered Theater Made**



**Cotton Hand Embroidered  
larger upper section (fess ordinary 1)**



**Cotton Hand Embroidered  
smaller upper section (chief ordinary 2)**



**Cotton Hand Embroidered**  
**More detail in Sun**



**Cotton Hand Embroidered**  
**On Blue Trill**

These shoulder sleeve insignia appear to be embroidered by hand with heavy cotton thread. Their manufacture is not typical of U.S. made shoulder sleeve insignia but the workmanship is of very high quality. The bottom part is woven.

### **Bullion Embroidered**







CBI Insignia



817th EAS Insignia  
(color version)



817th EAS Insignia  
(subdued version)

The CBI patch, originally designed in 1942 by Brig. General Frank Dorn, lives on today as an unofficial insignia of the 817th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron (817 EAS), a C-17 unit based in Incirlik, Turkey. Hence the Kuomintang Sun of China has been replaced with the Turkish crescent moon and star. But it's easily recognizable as being based on the CBI patch!

"Since the original 817th EAS stood up at Rhein-Main AB, Germany following September 11th, that patch depicted the C-47, C-54 and C-17 to reflect Rhein Main's historical legacy as a major hub of the Berlin Airlift. When Rhein-Main AB closed in 2006 and moved to Incirlik, the 4th Airlift Squadron, which was operating the stage at the time, redesigned the 817th patch to pay homage to their brief service in the CBI theater in 1944." (ed: The 4th Troop Carrier Sq operated in India from 12 Apr-11 Jun 1944. For more on the 4th TCS, go to the Air Transport Units page.)

"The original 817th patch, since it referenced the Berlin Airlift, became obsolete when Rhein-Main AB closed. I think one of the designers of the patch was a real history buff and wanted something

to reflect the unit's heritage while reflecting the current mission, hence the placement of the star and crescent on the patch.

While visiting with General Frank "Pinky" Dorn, one of our early rugged infantry comrades of the CBI and just shortly before he passed away on July 26, 1981, he related the history and origin of how this distinguished patch came into being. I pass on his remarks presented to me for those of our readers who may find the story of interest.

It was after the long ordeal of the May 1942, walkout over the Chin Hills of Burma with Stilwell that the then Lt. Col. Dorn, as aide-de-camp to "Vinegar Joe," arrived in India. This sad rag tagged remnant of the American contingent of the Chinese Expeditionary Force could not be classified as troops in uniform due to the wear and tear that was encountered through the jungles and mountains in reaching their destination and freedom from the enemy.

Since there was no U.S. supply depot or a quartermaster issue station to draw upon for new clothing that was so badly needed immediately, the British offered their uniform stock, as an expedient, to the Americans.

All was well, until our well deserved men frequented the local pubs and indulged in their thirst craven beer or other long deprived spirits. Thus mixing company with our British compatriots and perhaps becoming a little more boisterous than usual, a call to arms was initiated by British M.P.'s along with a few banged heads and a trip to the brig resulting.

When Gen. Stilwell was so informed, he would not accept that "his boys" were as bad as all that and felt that, just maybe, the British were more involved in this drinking bout and disturbing the so-called peace of the countryside. That evening, Col. Dorn having dinner with The Boss, as he was affectionately called, was given the assignment of coming up with a unique identifying feature that the Americans could be differentiated from the British since their uniforms were alike. This did present the problem as to who was doing what to whom.

Later that evening, Col. Dorn returned to his hotel room and went to work sketching some ideas for identification means. Once having accomplished his desire for a patch truly unique, the following morning had him running down one of our well known Hindustani tailors and telling him to go to work and have ready at least a half dozen completed versions of his design by that evening. This same evening and again having dinner with the top man, Gen. Stilwell spotted the unusual, out of the ordinary, and bright contrasting insignia on the khaki left arm shoulder high shirt of his aide-de-camp. He remarked, "Pinky, what's that?" pointing at the insignia. Dorn replied, "You told me to come up with something to identify our men from those of the British. Well, this is it! Do you like it?" A further hard look and then another and then the exclamation coming forth from Gen. Stilwell by his statement that "It was great!"

Col. Dorn then reached into his pocket, anticipating that his patch would be acceptable, handed the General a few of the newly tailored handicraft insignias and suggested that he too have them sewed on his shoulder sleeve. The General countered with an order to Dorn to round up every tailor in town to put them to work making similar patches and wanting several thousand made, as soon as possible. His reason, he stated, was expecting new American replacements for the

continued fight against the Japanese and he wanted to be ready with the issue.

Thus, the most beautiful patch in the history of our Armies was launched. It should be noted that this patch of ours was the only patch ever designed and utilized for a theater of war. All others conceived were for Armies, Corps, Divisions, Regiments, Squadrons and the like, but never for participants in a campaign within a theater such as China, Burma and India. Something to think about and reflect upon with a proudness that each of us can enjoy.

#### How The Emblem Of The CBI Theater Came To Be

According to Colonel M. Virden, the CBI patch was perhaps the prettiest, the proudest worn, then and today, and probably the most sought after by military souvenir collectors. We owe this emblem to the imagination of Brig. General Frank Dorn and this is his story:

"After the Allied collapse in Burma and General Stilwell's march over the mountains to Assam, the American effort in the CBI Theater was concentrated in India, particularly at the port of Karachi. In July and August, 1942, General Joseph W. Stilwell, the Theater Commanding General, left his Chungking headquarters for an extensive inspection tour of India. As his aide-de-camp, at that time, I accompanied him.

"While in Karachi, the local U. S. Commander informed Stilwell that relations between British and American troops were not good - all because their tropical uniforms were almost identical. When the military police of either army received a call to put down a brawl (a many times nightly performance), they arrived swinging night sticks indiscriminately. British soldiers objected to American M.P.'s breaking their heads; and American GI's objected just as strenuously to lumps and bruises applied by British clubs. Normal differences of opinion and fights in bars and night spots had accelerated at a rapid and disturbing rate.

"Stilwell decided that his men should be designated by some easily recognized emblem in order to reserve their heads for American M.P.'s only. The local British commander concurred that this could be the solution to the restoration of British-American relations.

"That evening when we returned to New Delhi, Stilwell told me to dream up a solution fast; perhaps some form of shoulder patch that would be distinctive and could be turned out in large quantities. After much scribbling, I came up with a simplified U. S. shield on whose blue field the Kuomintang Sun of China and the Star of India were imposed. Since the emblem of Burma was a peacock and we had just lost the whole country anyway, I did not even try to include it.

"I arranged with an Indian tailor shop to make up a few samples of my proposed patches and wore one on my own left shoulder that night at dinner with Stilwell and half a dozen of the New Delhi headquarters staff and command. The old man spotted my creation at once with a characteristic "What-the-hell-is-that-you've-got-on-your-sleeve, Dorn?"

"I replied that it was the brand new shoulder patch of the CBI Theater and gave him one of the samples which he asked me to pin on at once. He then turned to General "Spec" Wheeler and directed that an initial supply of thousands be made and distributed immediately to all U. S. troops

in India and China.

Thus the now famous emblem was born out of the necessity to preserve good relations - and heads -- in India."