

National Pledge Manual

National Society of Pershing Rifles



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NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

NATIONAL SOCIETY OF PERSHING RIFLES

NATIONAL PLEDGE MANUAL

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The Pershing Rifleman

Pershing Riflemen strive toward excellence in everything they do. They aim to exceed the standard and encourage others to do the same. Riflemen willfully yield a portion of their individuality for the good of the group. They recognize "Mission First and People Always" and accept nothing less than a standard of perfection. Rather than waiting to be ordered, Riflemen take the initiative and accomplish what needs to be done. He or she is a special breed; an individual within the group. The Pershing Rifleman is one of the few, the proud, to have their eyes on the stars and their feet firmly planted on the ground.

This is the legacy you are attempting to join. In order to do so, these ideals must become your own. Much is expected of you – live up to it.

Purpose of the Society

"The purpose of the National Society of Pershing Rifles is to develop, to the highest degree possible, outstanding traits of leadership, military science, military bearing, and discipline within the framework of a military oriented, honorary fraternity."

- General of the Armies of the United States John J. Pershing -

History of the National Society of Pershing Rifles

1891 - 1920

In 1891 General Pershing, then a second Lieutenant in the Sixth Cavalry, became Professor of Military Science and Tactics at the University of Nebraska. He, wishing to improve the morale of the ROTC unit, formed a select company of men, thereafter known as Company A.

In 1892 Company A traveled to the Omaha Drill Competition and won first honors. A year later, this unique drill unit became a fraternal organization bearing the name of the "Varsity Rifles." Out of appreciation for Lieutenant Pershing's initiative and cooperation, the organization changed its name to the "Pershing Rifles." It is this year, 1894, that we recognize as our official founding.

When Lieutenant Pershing left the University of Nebraska in 1895 he, at the request of a committee, gave the unit a pair of his cavalry breeches. These breeches were cut into small pieces and were worn on the uniform as a sign of membership. These "ribbons" were the first service ribbons worn in the United States.

During the Spanish American War thirty members of the now powerful Pershing Rifles enlisted in the First Nebraska Volunteers. W.H. Oury, a full Colonel in the U.S. Army and Captain of the Pershing Rifles, was placed in command. Another Rifleman whose last name we know to be Ribbons was made the unit's First Sergeant. (He would later achieve a high position in the War Department.) Every one of the thirty distinguished himself in the ensuing battles.

The first decade of the 20th Century saw the Pershing Rifles reach the height of its existence prior to the First World War. It was one of the most important features of Nebraska military and social life. Membership was considered a great military honor. Its influence in the Military Department continued strong until 1911.

After 1911 the organization suddenly lost prestige and declined deplorably. Its activity suddenly seemed to cease and the organization became a shadow of its former self. As this happened, military influence plummeted and the social activities were dropped. The conditions became so deplorable that in 1917 the organization was disbanded and its records were burned. Thus, in seven brief years, this promising organization passed from national renown into oblivion.

1920 - 1960

In 1920 the Pershing Rifles, like the phoenix, was reborn. Out of the ashes of the organization, killed by its own weight in 1917, there sprang a corps with new life and activity. The prestige it has experienced at the turn of the century was not so quick to return. As organized in 1920, the Pershing Rifles became an organization for junior officers. Soon however, it regained its status as a basic military society. The presence of Scabbard and Blade on the Nebraska campus probably prevented its growth as an officer's organization.

The growth of the Pershing Rifles after its reorganization is perhaps even more remarkable than its former decline. It stepped back into its old niche and worked to grow large enough to once again fill its own shoes. By 1924 the prestige of the organization was once again

on the rise. Special drill units across the nation began to seek admittance into the Pershing Rifles.

Meanwhile, in the fall of 1922, a group of advanced course men at Ohio State University joined together and former "The President's Guard." It was so named in honor of William Oxley Thompson, President of Ohio State University. The guard preformed an exhibition drill routine on Military Field Day in the spring of 1923. After this performance the unit was disbanded. In the fall of the same year the commander of the local Scabbard and Blade chapter reorganized the unit. Basic course men however, were not admitted.

This new organization was too loosely organized and too closely connected with the university's established drill unit for it to stand alone. In the spring of 1925 it applied for affiliation with the Pershing Rifles, but the Nebraska organization refused. The Ohio State group, seeing the need for a national organization for basic course men, threatened to nationalize "The President's Guard" and leave Nebraska out of it if the two organizations could not work together. Finally, after a year of negotiations, the Nebraska organization approved the formal application for the Ohio State organization. This application was dated 13 May 1925. John A. Picker, Colonel of the Pershing Rifles, installed the chapter on 22 May 1925. Thus was inaugurated a new chapter and policy that welcomed units nation-wide into the Pershing Rifles.

In 1927 the National Headquarters in Lincoln granted the University of Tennessee's crack drill unit a charter. This group was designated Company C, and was established under the influence of the Scabbard and Blade chapter located at the school. From this time until 1929, the Nebraska unit focused on the establishment of strong local units based on the belief that if local units were strong, a national organization could be easily organized. Using this mentality the Pershing Rifles at Nebraska surpassed even its Spanish American War greatness.

The year 1928 brought the establishment of an official National Headquarters at the University of Nebraska. This built the foundation for a strong national unit. In the summer of the same year, a number of circulars were sent to universities that did not hold a Pershing Rifles unit, inviting their crack drill units to apply for charters from the National Headquarters. Those who knew the value of the Pershing Rifles as an organization capable of promoting interest in drill work for basic students heeded the circulars. During that summer, officers attached to the schools where Pershing Rifles chapters were hosted met with officers from other institutions and as such, the organization received excellent publicity.

By 1935 the Pershing Rifles had grown to 22 Companies and was split into three Brigades and six Regiments. On 23 April of that year, General Pershing returned to the National Headquarters to meet with the National Staff and the winner of that year's Pershing Medal. He was keenly interested in the happenings of the Society, including finances, expansion, drill competition, and the publication of *The Pershing Rifleman*, a publication that continued uninterrupted until 1973 and included letters from General Pershing as well as other high-ranking military officials. It was during this time that the leadership began to push for standardization including the use of cords and stationary to help promote unity. A small-bore rifle competition was the national event and was enthusiastically supported by all units.

1960 - Present

Over the next several decades, the Pershing Rifles continued to grow. In 1961, the Society was comprised of 139 active units with nearly 4,100 initiates for that year alone. Several of

the 15 active Regimental Headquarters' had to split into battalions or added inspection teams to help with the ever-increasing numbers. Beginning in 1962, the Army and Air Force ROTC systems began undergoing a change in operation and structure. As such, the Pershing Rifles began to look for new ways to adapt to the changes. Alumni programs were expanded to include the formation of a tri-service advisory board of retired and reserve officers to help guide the Society. Various units from around the country also began to work with high school JROTC units and brought in a parallel organization on that level known as the "Blackjacks." During the 1964-65 academic year the operational changes in the ROTC program that had rumored in 1962 came into full implementation under the ROTC Reorganization Act. Due to these changes, there were fewer cadets enrolled in ROTC programs to begin with, hence making expansion more difficult, as would be the case with maintaining the size of Pershing Rifles units.

The core of the Society remained strong. Two new Regimental Headquarters' were added between 1962 and 1965, bringing the number up to seventeen, and the number of units to 149.

At the 1967 National Convention, the Society officially brought in a second dimension to the Pershing Rifles – the Pershing Rifles Aggressor Force. The Aggressor Force was implemented to encourage the training and development of tactics and bring a combative dimension necessary to mastering the changing world members would enter as military officers. The 5th Regimental Headquarters, hosted by Pennsylvania State University, was charged with drawing up the Standard Operating Procedures and national policy regarding these units.

1969 marked the Pershing Rifles' 75th anniversary. The organization received salutations from President of the United States John F. Kennedy, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force General Curtis E. LeMay, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General of the Army Omar N. Bradley. These were published to honor the Society's history and achievements.

The face of the Pershing Rifles continued to evolve with the changes of society. The Pershing Rifles disappeared from many schools following the Vietnam War with the dissolution of ROTC programs and the end of compulsory ROTC basic courses. In response to the shrinking number of units and Riflemen within these units, the National Headquarters increased the emphasis on tactics and marksmanship. By 1974 the Pershing Rifles was organized into thirteen regiments comprised of 137 units.

The 1970s saw the introduction of women into the National Society of Pershing Rifles, with the first female pledge at Company L-4 (North Carolina State University) in 1971 and the first female active member from M-16 (Florida State University) a year later. This does not however, imply a lack of participation or association with the Pershing Rifle before the 1970s. The Co-Ed Affiliates of Pershing Rifles (CAPERS) had established units along side Pershing Rifles units for decades. Even earlier, a sponsor was often chosen as an honorary addition to various staffs. When the Society opened its doors to women, CAPERS units were invited to join.

In 1980 the Pershing Rifles selected its first female commander, Paula R. Harmon. During the same decade, units across the nation increased focus on different aspects; some marksmanship, others tactics and hostage situation training, while still other held true to the foundation of the Society, armed exhibition drill. Competitions were held for each of those activities throughout the year with the drill competition still taking the spotlight. In celebration of its 90th Anniversary, the Governor of Nebraska presented a citation for

outstanding service to the state as well as declaring a week in March to be Pershing Rifles week.

In the early 1990s increases in participation were seen through more regimental sponsored competitions and social events. Expansion efforts continued throughout the decade in spite of fluctuations in active units. Following managerial problems at the regimental level, the National Legislative Body dissolved all Regimental Headquarters' in 1997. Discovering that rather than solving problems, the removal of this level of command increased problems, especially in communication, camaraderie, and participation at national events, Regimental Commands were re-established starting with the 8th Regimental Headquarters in 2001. The 1st, 4th, 12th, and 17th Regimental Headquarters followed suit in 2002-2003, with the 2nd Regimental Headquarters being established a year later. Currently, 1st, 2nd, 4th, 8th, 9th, and 17th Regimental Headquarters' are operational.

The Life of General John J. Pershing



Early Life

John Joseph Pershing was born on 13 September 1860 near the frontier town of Laclede, Missouri. His father John Fletcher Pershing left the Pennsylvania farmland to seek a new life with the booming railroad industry. His innate leadership skills soon saw him installed as a foreman on his company's track laying crew in Tennessee. It was here that he met Ann Elizabeth Thompson and, after a whirlwind courtship, they were married. The couple followed the employment opportunities of the railroad to Missouri, where Ann prepared for the birth of her first child. As the work camp they live in lacked adequate resources for childbirth, Mrs. Pershing was moved to the town of Laclede.

John J. Pershing spent his early years at work with his father. His family settled in Laclede where his father ran a farm, a general store, and speculated in real estate with mixed successes over the years. At the age of four, Pershing was given his first taste of warfare during the American Civil War. He was witness to skirmishes between his family and Confederate raiders, and with a garrison of Union soldiers. His childhood is filled with typical stories of growth and mischief. However, clearly present from an early age was a character of discipline, courage, and determination modeled after his childhood hero, George Washington.

It was in 1875 that John Pershing began to rise as his own man. Pershing found his family in dire financial trouble after a drought ruined his father's over-ambitious land investments. Because of this, his father left to seek employment, and young John sought work in Laclede's school for black children. Though Pershing was very young, he obtained the job due to his reputation for scholarly qualities, and the undesirability of the position itself. Despite the heckling of his peers, Pershing undertook the job with skill and pride, resolutely defending the honor of his position.

Pershing worked as a teacher in Laclede and later another nearby town until in 1882 a competitive examination was held for entrance into the United States Military Academy. Though Pershing had ambitions to become a lawyer, he saw West Point as a remarkable opportunity to receive a first rate education. Pershing won the competition and reported to West Point in September of 1882.

Early Military Career

Pershing, while above the average, was not a great student. He graduated 30th in a class of 77. Pershing did however, stand out as a leader with exceptional military bearing; Cadet

Pershing was appointed to the highest possible cadet rank during each of his four years at the academy. Due to his excellent performance, Pershing was commissioned into the cavalry and sent west.

Lieutenant Pershing began his career with the 6th Cavalry on 30 September 1866 at Fort Bayard, New Mexico. This was the period of the battles against the Apache warrior Geronimo. Pershing accomplished many commendable feats during this time, most notably commanding a detachment charged with setting up a heliograph line – a kind of communication relay utilizing mirrors and the sun – across 160 miles of rough terrain filled with hostile Indians. Pershing was later hand selected by General Nelson Miles to command his Indiana Scouts during the Sioux uprising in South Dakota. By the 1890s, the Army finally pacified the last of the major Indian resistance in the west.

With the west pacified, Pershing again found himself filling the role of a teacher. On 15 September 1891, he became the Professor of Military Science and Tactics at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln, Nebraska. This proved a daunting task. The late 19th century equivalent of the ROTC existed to training college students in the art of war should the populace be called to serve as they had in the Civil War. However, in the peaceful atmosphere of the time, Pershing inherited command of a program with no real spirit.

The Battalion of Cadets numbered 90 on Pershing's arrival. Within a very short period of time however, that number had expanded 350. The students stood in awe of the veteran 2nd Lieutenant, always magnificently dressed, stern, and missing no detail. Pershing's honest commitment to excellence was contagious; his spirit invigorated the students. By November of 1892 the quality of the Cadet Battalion was greatly enhanced, and Pershing was promoted to 1st Lieutenant.

During this time, Pershing suggested the unit's participation in a national drill team competition in Omaha, Nebraska. This was the origin of the Pershing Rifles. They began as an elite 45 man team, drilling twice a day for two months. Their harshest inspector was Pershing himself, who rigidly ensured the unit did not succumb to overconfidence. In Omaha, the Pershing Rifles competed against the finest drill units in American, and won.

Pershing continued teaching in Nebraska until 1895 when he was reassigned to the 10th Cavalry in Montana, a black regiment command by white officers. Pershing served with distinction until he was noticed again by General Miles, who selected Pershing as an aide in Washington D.C. After six months of duty with General Miles, Pershing returned to West Point as an instructor of tactics.

Pershing's success with the cadets of Nebraska did not follow him to New York. The cadets of West Point detested Pershing for his high standards, and subjected him to various pranks and "the silence;" a cold tradition where all cadets stand stone-like at attention for as long as an unpopular officer occupied the mess hall with them. However, the lasting legacy of the cadets was to assign Pershing a nickname scathing in its hatred of the officer who had come from the all black 10th Cavalry. They called him "Nigger Jack." This name stuck with Pershing, being used by his detractors throughout his career until reporters in the 1st World War censored it to the surname he is now remembered by: Black Jack.

Cuba and the Philippines

In 1898, the destruction of the battleship Maine sent American blundering into war. America conquered the Philippines, and an expeditionary force prepared to invade Cuba. Pershing, through persistence, succeeded in returning to the 10th Cavalry to take part in the

Cuban campaign. The 10th Cavalry, one of the few seasoned and professional units in a campaign of amateurs, covered itself with glory. The dismounted buffalo soldiers of the 10th seized the hill of El Caney, part of the San Juan heights, alongside Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders. Pershing received his promotion to Captain while en route to the Philippines in recognition for his bravery. Pershing's regimental commander, a veteran of the Civil War, praised Pershing as the bravest man under fire he had ever seen.

In August of 1899, Pershing arrived in the Philippines to serve as adjutant general of the Department of Mindanao. There, he served in various campaigns against the Moros, a tribe of Islamic fundamentalists that the Spaniards had never been able to subdue. Pershing was then posted to Camp Vicars in the Mindanao region. However, after his promotion and the transfer of the Colonel commanding the post, Pershing found himself the ranking officer. Pershing filled this duty admirably, winning many of the Moro tribes by diplomacy, and a few others by the sword.

During all his Philippine campaigns, Pershing's military leadership was unquestionably brilliant. However, his secret to success was in understanding and respecting the customs of the Moro tribesman and seeking to mesh the conflicting cultures of tribalistic Islamic fundamentalism with American governing control. In light of his successes, a movement began to promote Captain Pershing to the rank of Brigadier General. This movement involved many general officers who had observed Pershing's ability, and extended directly to President Theodore Roosevelt who proposed the idea in an address to Congress.

Marriage and Promotion to Brigadier General

Pershing returned to Washington in late 1903. He was introduced to Helen Frances Warren, daughter of an influential Wyoming Senator. This began a passionate and brief courtship that lasted until Pershing was assigned to serve as an observer of the Russo-Japanese War. Though Pershing had been something of a lady's man throughout his life, the couple's feelings for each other were deep and utter. They were married on 26 January 1905 – the day before Pershing sailed for Tokyo. While in Japan and Manchuria, Pershing's keen eye observed many lessons that would be all too useful when war came to Europe. Pershing first daughter Helen was born on 08 September 1906 in Tokyo.

In a spectacular coup, President Theodore Roosevelt, with the power to personally commission officers as either 2nd Lieutenants or Brigadier Generals, gave Pershing his first star. Captain Pershing was promoted to Brigadier General over 862 senior officers: 257 Captains, 364 Majors, 131 Lieutenant Colonels, and 110 Colonels. Many cried foul, citing Pershing's marriage as the real reason for the promotion. Accusations of scandalous relationships during his time in the Philippines filled headlines. Roosevelt stood by General Pershing however, and in time the storm subsided.

Following his promotion, Pershing returned to the Philippines to take command of Fort McKinley, near Manila. On 24 March 1908 his second child, Anne, was born. The Pershings stayed until forced a new assignment. They traveled from Asia to Europe through Russia to observe a brewing conflict in the Balkans that did not materialize. In 1909 the family returned to America.

On 24 June 1909, Pershing's only son Warren was born in Wyoming. Shortly thereafter, Pershing was returned to the Philippines due to the instability of the Moro province. Due to Pershing's calm leadership the Moro tribesmen were disarmed, and violence avoided. During this service, Pershing's last daughter Mary Margaret was born on 20 May 1912.

Loss of Family and Poncho Villa

Pershing returned to the United States to take charge of the 8th Brigade in San Francisco. His mission was to patrol the Mexican – American border in response to the wave of instability and revolution sweeping Mexico. Pershing established his family in San Francisco before heading to Fort Bliss, Texas to take command of the unit.

After one year of preparations for the family at Fort Bliss, the Pershings were prepared to be reunited as a family. However, on the morning of 27 August 1915, Pershing was awakened by a telephone call from the Associated Press mistaking Pershing for his aide, and reporting one more news of a fire. The correspondent soon realized he was not speaking to a lieutenant as Pershing demanded information. A fire during the next had killed his wife and their three daughters by smoke inhalation. Only his son Warren was rescued, unconscious, from the blaze. This was a mortal blow to Pershing, one from which he never fully recovered.

In March of 1916 Pershing, still distraught from his loss, was assigned to pursue the Mexican bandit Poncho Villa. The revolutionary had provoked the wrath of the United States by raiding border towns. Pershing threw himself into the task to overcome his grief. The campaign of the American Army through Mexico was one of miserable conditions with little hope of capturing Villa. Throughout the campaign however, Pershing remained a firm leader. He was always sharply dressed, always clean-shaven, and usually wearing a tie. On more than one occasion, his mere presence was enough to diffuse potentially hostile situation with pro-Villa Mexican locals.

The First World War

General Pershing returned to America in January of 1917. Though the Army had not captured Poncho Villa, they had successes in taking away his ability to harass American towns. The campaign also gave the Army much needed experience in handling large numbers of troops in the field. This experience was a principle reason for the selection of Pershing to lead the American Expeditionary Force going to Europe following the entry of the country in the Great War on 05 February 1917. Pershing and a small staff that would form the core of the American War Machine sailed for Europe on 28 May 1917.

General Pershing, now a Major General with the temporary rank of full General, faced the largest and most difficult task of his career; assembling and training an American Army in Europe while keeping his forces independent of foreign commanders. Over three years of bitter trench warfare had nearly bled white the manpower of the British and the French. The French, whose Army by this time was in a state of mutiny, expected Americans to be used as replacement in French units. (The British, although in a better state than the French, believed the same who happen with American troops in British units.) Neither President Wilson nor General Pershing would have any of it.

Perhaps the most outstanding legacy of General John Pershing was his stubborn insistence on not wasting American lives under foreign commanders. American troops would fight in American units with American leadership. Great pressure was placed on Pershing from the French and the British, but Pershing would not budge. The doughboys would not be wasted as replacements; they would fight only as Americans when they were prepared.

Pershing's care for his men was unquestionable. So too was his demand for professionalism. Pershing ordered that American soldiers would be clean-shaven, uniforms

pressed, and leather polished. He inspected units, watch battle drills, and insisted poor performances be repeated until deficiencies were corrected. No detail was too small to escape the eyes of the Commander in Chief of the American Expeditionary Force.

The Army's first test came at Cantigny on 28 May 1918. In the coming months, Pershing would lead America's Army as an independent force through the St. Mihiel Salient offensive in September of 1918 and the Meuse-Argonne offensive shortly thereafter. These were costly, hard won victories. However the influx of fresh Americans tipped the scales in Western Europe. This led to the German collapse from within, and the armistice of 11 November 1918. Pershing however, was unsatisfied. He believed that allowing the German armies to return home without the shame of surrender would cause many Germans to believe they had not been defeated militarily. Pershing believed the result would be another war in Europe.

Late Military Career

Pershing returned to America on 08 September 1919 to a hero's welcome. His final duties in the military were filled with public relations tours, tempered with close involvement in his son's upbringing. Though Pershing felt he could not refuse political office if the American people demanded it, no such demand came and Pershing made no effort to seek it. At the height of his triumph, Pershing remained a humble and professional soldier.

General Pershing's final assignment was to serve in the relatively new Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army position. During this time, congress honored Pershing by promoting him to the permanent grade of General of the Armies of the United States, a rank higher than any other American General until the honor was posthumously bestowed on George Washington in 1976.

Pershing retired from active duty in 1924 at 64 years of age. He published a two-volume memoir on his experiences in the First World War, which was a clinical study of interest only to historians. Pershing regarded this as a poor effort, and a second attempt was deemed no better by the General, and was never published.

Pershing's health soon drove him from public service. He remained active in advocating the United States military and continued preparedness for war, and sought to remain active in American military matters.

John Joseph Pershing, General of the Armies of the United States, died on 15 July 1948 at Walter Reed Hospital. He is buried in Arlington National Cemetery. He was a man of ordinary background who rose to extraordinary heights by virtue of his own commitment to excellence. More than a great soldier, Pershing stands as one of the truly great Americans; a truly self-made man incorruptibly by the power he achieved. His life of dedication to excellence will forever stand as a shining example for the American soldier, and the American citizen.

Colors, Insignia and Symbolism

Colors

The colors of the National Society of Pershing Rifles are Blue and White. These colors have traditional national significance and each represent the cornerstones of the Society and its members.

Blue

- Loyalty
- Devotion
- Friendship
- Truth

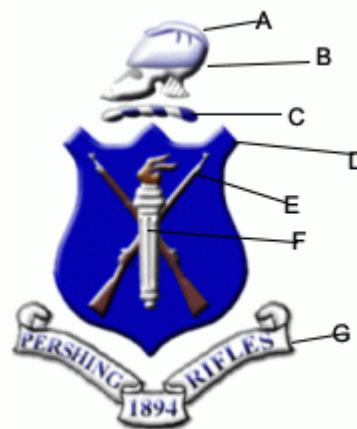
White

- Purity
- Cleanliness of Life
- Rectitude of Conduct

Insignia

The Crest

L.G. Balfour of Attleboro, Massachusetts designed the Pershing Rifles Crest, which was adopted at the 1932 National Convention by the National Legislative Body. The official crest consists of a Grecian helmet and torse over the inscription "Pershing Rifles" and the founding date "1894." The crest is a guide for the members in our organization. It tells a little of our history and explains through the various symbols what is expected of us as Pershing Rifleman, officers, and as ladies and gentlemen. Each part of the coat-of-arms bears some significance pertaining to the Pershing Rifles



- A. CHAMELEON: The Chameleon, which was not part of the originally adopted crest, is the symbol of the tri-service aspect of the fraternity. After becoming a tri-service organization, the Society added the Chameleon to represent its members' adaptability to change and constant preparedness.

- B. HELMET: The Helmet is the symbol of the chivalry of the medieval knights. This spirit is the cornerstone of the character of every Pershing Rifles member. It is a prime requisite for conduct, a necessary part of every true heart. It symbolizes both the courage of the membership of the Society and the Society's protection of its members.
- C. TORSE: The Torse, a six-divisional rope just below the Helmet, denotes the romantic aspect of the heraldry and is the symbol of the chivalrous attitude for the men for womanhood. It is representative of the Pershing Rifles Cord.
- D. SHIELD: The Shield, which bears the Crossed Rifles and Torch, is the symbol of the readiness of the Rifleman to meet any situation anywhere, on the battlefield or wherever we may be called.
- E. CROSSED RIFLES: The Crossed Rifles, crossed saltier-wise on the escutcheon of Pershing Rifles form a chevron, which has been noted as an emblem of service and of helping one another, here representing the spirit of friendship and the cooperative efforts of units in the Society in serving on another. The Crossed Rifles can also be seen as a symbol for power and military strength for the insurance of peace.
- F. TORCH: The Torch, flamed and superimposed over the Crossed Rifles, represents four values inherent to the Society. First, in its entirety, the torch stands for indomitable leadership embodying both the dutiful following of instructions, like true soldiers, and the intelligence issuance of command. It stands also for the eternal flame of true friendship, a fundamental quality inherent within the Society. The Torch also denotes scholarship and knowledge. To meet the demands of leadership, we must have knowledge. It does not mean just the "minimum effort" of scholarship.
- G. SCROLL: The Scroll bears the name of our organization and the year of its founding.

The Rank Shield

The Pershing Rifles Officer Rank Shield is blue in color, trimmed in silver, and almost identical in nature to the Shield found in the Pershing Rifles Crest. Officer Rank Shields include a Torch and Crossed Rifles. The rank of the officer within the Society is denoted towards the top of the shield, above the Torch and Crossed Rifles.

The Junior Enlisted and Non-Commissioned Officer Rank Shield is again, blue in color, but trimmed with gold. A small gold version of the Shield found in the Pershing Rifles crest rests above the chevrons.

Although a service specific device denoting rank is present to recognize our tri-service affiliation, it is important to note that a Rifleman steps out of his or her service in interest of the Brotherhood. It is for this reason that the Shield, Torch, and Crossed Rifles are the basis for both the Officer and Enlisted Rank Shields. We are proud to be tri-service in nature and recognize that our ability to work together now will increase our effectiveness on the battlefields of the future.

The Cord

The Cord is a symbol of honor bestowed to the Pershing Rifles member upon initiation and is to be worn on the left shoulder. The cord is purple and white with the tip bearing the

Pershing Rifles Crest. The original colors of the Chord were blue and white – the colors of the Society. Legend has it that during World War II along with many other rationed items, blue dye was in short supply. The company that made cords substituted purple for the blue. Following the war and the end of rationing, the cords returned to blue and white for a short period of time. In the wake of the Vietnam War and in honor of sacrifices made in that conflict as they have been during World War II, the cord was once again returned to purple and white and has remained as such since.

The Membership Ribbon

The design of the Membership Ribbon is identical to the Army Good Conduct Medal (except in color), which denotes exemplary conduct at all times. It is worn on the left breast of the uniform. The six white stripes on the membership ribbon, from the wearer's right to left stand for:

- A. Devotion to Duty and Country
- B. A Bold and True Heart
- C. Readiness to Meet any Situation
- D. Leadership
- E. Military Proficiency
- F. Scholarship



The Pledge Ribbon

The Pledge Ribbon is half blue and half white. It is worn on the left breast of the uniform with the white segment to the left. It serves to remind prospective members of the values portrayed in the colors blue and white.



Symbolism of the White Rose

The official flower of the National Society of Pershing Rifles is the white rose. Traditionally, this flower represents the most important man or family of the era. For the Pershing Rifleman, the white rose symbolizes the great life of our founder and patron, General of the Armies John Joseph Pershing, who made the ideals of the Pershing Rifles a reality.

National Events

Fall Commander's Call

Fall Commander's Call (FCC) is an annual meeting for the leadership of the Society. Historically, the event is held at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln, Nebraska. The Company Commander and his or her Executive Officer are expected to attend. If the Company Commander is unable to be present, it is expected that he or she will be represented properly. This meeting includes reports by the National Headquarters, the Alumni Advisory board, and each Regimental Headquarters. In addition, Company representatives are able to propose legislation which is then discussed and voted on. If passed at the Fall Commander's Call, the legislation then goes before the National Legislative Body at the National Convention where if passed, it is enacted.

National Convention and Drill Competition

The National Convention (NATCON) is an annual event hosted by a unit within the Society. Its location is determined one year in advance at the previous National Convention. The National Convention is the major legislative session of the year where the items proposed and passed at the Fall Commander's Call are discussed and receives a final vote; the next National Commander is selected; and all new units are officially brought into the organization.

In conjunction with the legislative meeting, the National Drill Competition is also held. This is the opportunity for Pershing Rifles units to display their skills as individuals, duos, squads, and platoon in various regulation and exhibition events. These events are open to all fully initiated Riflemen within the Society. This is an important time for building the bonds of Brotherhood on the national level, and as such, it is a very important event for all the Society's units.

By Order of the National Legislative Body:

Official:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christopher D. Scheuermann", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Christopher D. Scheuermann
Major General, Pershing Rifles
Commanding

DISTRIBUTION:

This publication has been authorized for public distribution.