

# Special Forces Insignia

Much of the Special Forces uniform insignia is symbolic of an early guerrilla fighter, the American Indian.

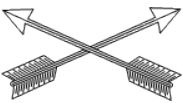


The gold and teal Special Forces patch is worn by members of Special Forces units around the world. The arrowhead shape represents the craft and stealth of the Indians, America's first warriors. An upturned dagger represents the unconventional warfare missions of Special Forces. Three lightning bolts represent blinding speed and strength, and the three methods of infiltration – land, sea and air. The gold represents constancy and inspiration, and the background of teal blue

represents the Special Forces' encompassing of all brand assignments.



Emblazoned on the distinctive black and silver crest worn by Special Forces soldiers is the Special Forces motto: *De Oppressor Liber*, a Latin phrase that means *To Free the Oppressed*. Two crossed arrows symbolize the Special Forces' role in unconventional warfare. A fighting knife is attached over the arrows, which reflect the qualities of a Special Forces soldier – straight and true. The knife, a silent deadly weapon, was used by the American Indian.



The Special Forces officer branch inherited its insignia – two crossed arrows - from the Indian scouts, several of whom earned Medals of Honor while serving U.S. forces in almost every major campaign. Crossed arrows were a symbol of peace to the U.S. Scouts, which were inactivated in 1939. However, the crossed arrows served the 1<sup>st</sup> Special Service Force through World War II, and some Special Forces officers at Fort Bragg began wearing them unofficially on their collars in the Sixties. In April 1987 a separate brand of the Army was created for Special Forces officers, who then formally adopted the crossed arrows as their official branch insignia.