Proposal for NPS Rangers to wear rank insignia

**History and Justification**

There are thousands of uniformed public law enforcement organizations in the United States. Such an organization is typically called a Police Department, Sheriff's Department, or Sheriff's Office, but may be called something else. Law enforcement agencies in the United States typically use variants of the same system of ranks and rank insignia, which is based on those established by the United States armed forces. The purpose of ranks and rank insignia is to clearly identify people's positions within a hierarchy.

As in the military, the law enforcement rank structure is designed for supervisory, management, and command functions. In the military, the rank of corporal through the ascending sergeant ranks are supervisory functions. The rank of corporal is not universal throughout law enforcement. However, the rank does carry supervisory authority. The corporal will normally act as the squad or unit supervisor when the sergeant is on leave or otherwise unavailable. The three stripe sergeant insignia is the most common first line supervisor among law enforcement agencies. Lieutenants and captains are company grade ranks, and they can be compared to management. Major through the colonel ranks are field grade officers, and they can be compared to command.

The lack of a formal rank structure within the NPS has traditionally been problematic for commissioned Rangers. During multi agency incidents, members of other law enforcement agencies both do not recognize the NPS’s rank structure and cannot identify who holds these positions. For example, a captain with a state police agency, does not understand what a District Ranger is. Furthermore, without visible rank insignia, that captain has no way of identifying who a supervisor is on a multi-agency incident. The lack of visible rank has also proved to be cumbersome in urban parks, where Rangers work with large police agencies on a daily basis. The public also recognized rank insignia. A visitor that is wishing to speak with a supervisor, has no way of knowing if they are talking with a supervisor without any visible rank insignia.

**Proposed General Policy**

To allow the public and members of other law enforcement agencies the ability to easily identify supervisors within the NPS, Commissioned Rangers are authorized to wear collar insignia signifying their supervisory responsibilities.

The insignia will be small (3/4”) and gold in color. The insignia will be metal pin on. Supervisors may place sew on cloth insignia on the collars of their outerwear. When wearing the service dress jacket and the ike jacket, supervisors will replace the “USNPS” insignia with their perspective rank insignia, Rangers who do not have supervisory insignia, will continue to wear the “USNPS” on the service dress jacket and the ike jacket.

*Although GL can sometimes be a rough guide to a ranger’s supervisory authority, the intent is that a rank insignia reflect the ranger’s actual responsibilities in day to day operations or, in the case of a special events team, their supervisory function while on that team. The following summary is our proposed general use of rank collar badges:*
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Corporal – GL-9 (With Supervisory Responsibilities)

- The corporal rank insignia is intended for those GL-9 Rangers who have supervisory responsibilities. For example; GL-9’s who supervise seasonals or GL-9’s or are in an acting role when the GL-11 is absent.
- When Rangers are working as a part of a special team (SETT, Honor Guard, etc.) the Squad Leaders or Assistant Team Leaders will wear the corporal rank insignia. This policy will be further clarified in the individual SOP’s of those teams.

Sergeant – GL-11

- Intended for first line supervisors (Sub-district rangers or district rangers, depending on park structure).
- When Rangers are working as a part of a special team (SETT, Honor Guard, etc.) the Team Leaders will wear the sergeant rank insignia. This policy will be further clarified in the individual SOP’s of those teams.

Lieutenant – GL-12 District rangers??

Capitan – GL-13 Chief Ranger

Major – GL-14 (Supt or other high ranking LE)

Colonel – GS-15

- Worn by the Deputy Director of Law Enforcement and Emergency Services
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Proposed Method of Implementation

The NPS has historically been resistant to change in regards to the uniform. Prior to Rangers wearing their commission badges on their uniforms, the honor guard started wearing the commission shields on the honor guard uniform as a test or phase in period.

In the instance of rank insignia, the honor guard and SETT teams could be utilized as for a test and phase in period. These teams already have distinct uniforms and adding rank insignia will have little if any impact.

Once the wearing of rank insignia on the SETT and honor guard uniforms has been accepted during a predetermined time frame, the rank insignia policy will be released to the rest of the service.

If a further phase in period is necessary, the NPS could implement the wearing of rank insignia at urban parks.

References

- [http://www.careerpoliceofficer.com/PoliceandPolice/police_rank_insignias.html](http://www.careerpoliceofficer.com/PoliceandPolice/police_rank_insignias.html)
- [http://swordandpen.tripod.com/united-states-police-ranks.htm](http://swordandpen.tripod.com/united-states-police-ranks.htm)