## **Challenge Coins**

By; Skypilot

Challenge Coins has a long history and tradition in the Armed Forces and those of you that have served our nation knows what it is.

It started back in World War 1 when American pilots based in Europe received these coins bearing their Squadron Insignia from their Lieutenant as mementos of their service together. One Pilot placed the coin in a small leather pouch attached to a necklace. When and if this Pilot were shoot down and captured by Germans, who confiscated all of their personal identification. They allowed him to keep his necklace and leather pouch-possibly thinking it was a religious medal and it was of no use to them or the

If the pilot was lucky enough to escape his German captives and were recaptured by the French, them thinking he were a saboteur, the French would prepare to execute him. When one of the French captors recognized the Squadron Insignia on the medallion, the American's life was spared. Instead of shooting him, they gave him a bottle of wine. Back at his Squadron, it became a tradition to ensure that all members carried their coin at all times. Members would challenge each other to show their coin. If those who were challenged could not show it to those who challenged them, they would have to buy a drink or another mutually agreeable reward. If those who were challenged showed their



coin, then the challenger had to buy.

This unique Military tradition lives on today. I remember when I reported to my unit in Vietnam after receiving all my combat gear, my First Sergeant came up and handed me my coin. Recently I had the Honor of presenting one of my Brothers a coin for receiving the Silver Star for his valor in Vietnam.

Others have picked up this tradition through the years, like Police Officers,

Fire fighters and so on. So there you have it a part of history you may or may not have known. This was researched through the thanks of the Army Heritage Education Center/Museum located in Carlisle, Pa. which you can find on the Internet at http://www.carlisle.army.mil/ahec/ if you ever get a chance take time to visit. All are welcome there.

Until next month "Keep on Triken" . Be safe and may the Great Spirit ride with you. Please pray for our Troops deployed throughout the world and also our POW~MIA and their families who wait for their return. God Bless America.





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