

Challenge Coin

International

OFFICIAL RULES

A 'Coin Check' consists of a Challenge and a Response.

1. RULES:

A. The challenge is initiated by drawing your coin, holding it in the air by whatever means possible and state, scream, shout or otherwise verbally acknowledge that you are initiating a coin check. Another, but less vocal method is to firmly place it on the bar, table, or floor (this should produce an audible noise which can be easily heard by those being challenged, but try not to leave a permanent imprint). If you accidentally drop your coin and it makes an audible sound upon impact, then you have just "accidentally" initiated a coin check. (This is called paying the price for improper care of your coin.)

B. The response consists of all those persons being challenged drawing their coin in a like manner. You must produce a coin with a MILITARY and/or VETERAN'S LOGO on it (ie: Unit, War, Job, Rank, Branch, Organization, etc).



C. If you are challenged and are unable to properly respond, you must buy a round of drinks for the challenger and the group being challenged.

D. If everyone being challenged responds in the correct manner, the challenger must buy a round of drinks for all those people he/she challenged.

E. Failure to buy a round, when you forgot your coin, is a despicable crime.

2. WHEN - WHERE

A. Coin checks are permitted, ANY TIME, ANY PLACE'.

3. EXCEPTIONS

A. There are no exceptions to the rules. They apply to those clothed or unclothed. At the time of the challenge you are permitted one step and an arms reach to locate your coin. If you still cannot reach it -- SORRY ABOUT THAT!

4. A COIN IS A COIN:

A. Coins attached on belt buckles are considered "belt buckles".

B. Coins on key chains are considered "key chains."

C. Coins placed in a "holder/clasp" and worn around the neck like a necklace are valid and are considered a coin.

D. Coins in Coin Protectors are valid Coins.

5. ADVICE: Never, ever be caught without your Coin.

History of the Challenge Coin

Special Forces

The 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) was the first for modern military Coins, established by COL Vernon E. Greene, 10th SFGA Commander in 1969. The original having a Trojan Horse on the front and a SF Beret and scroll on the back.



A story has circulated that during the late 1940s, the Lodge Act allowing non-U.S. citizens to join the Army, of which many joined the 10th Special Forces Group. With so many nationalities — and varying proficiency in English in the 10th Special Forces Group, a coin was produced as a way to establish bona fides, “to identify guys in the unit without a whole lot of wrangling” troopers would show their coins to prove they were with the 10th.

World War I

During World War I, American volunteers from all parts of the country filled the newly formed flying squadrons. Some were wealthy scions attending colleges such as Yale and Harvard who quit in mid-term to join the war. In one squadron a wealthy lieutenant ordered medallions struck in solid bronze carrying the squadron emblem for every member of his squadron. He himself carried his medallion in small leather pouch around his neck.

Shortly after acquiring the medallions, the pilot's aircraft was severely damaged by ground fire. He was forced to land behind enemy lines and was immediately captured by a German patrol. In order to discourage his escape, the Germans took all of his personal identification except for the small leather pouch around his neck. In the meantime, he was taken to a small French town near the front. Taking advantage of a bombardment that night, he escaped. However, he was without personal identification.

He succeeded in avoiding German patrols and reached the front lines. With great difficulty, he crossed no-man's land. Eventually, he stumbled onto a French outpost. Unfortunately, the French in this sector had been plagued by saboteurs. They sometimes masqueraded as civilians and wore civilian clothes. Not recognizing the young pilot's American accent, the French thought him a saboteur and made ready to execute him. Just in time, he remembered his leather pouch containing the medallion. He showed the medallion to his would-be executioners.

His French captors recognized the squadron insignia on the medallion and delayed long enough for him to confirm his identity. 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 medallion or coin at all times. This was accomplished through a challenge in the following manner: a challenger would ask to see the coin. If the challenged could not produce his coin, he was required to buy a drink of choice for the member who challenged him. If the challenged member produced his coin, the challenging member was required to pay for the drink. This tradition continued throughout the war and for many years after while surviving members of the squadron were still alive.

The fighting men and women of the 48th Intelligence Squadron proudly continue this tradition.

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