

MILITARY BUTTONS

Compiled by Peter Vorberg from information provided by Denzil I Cowley



Buttons – See Image on next page

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Edward VII Gilt RH, R.H.		George V Gilt Mounted		George V Gilt RH, RH
2		Queens Crown General Service		Kings Crown General Service	
3	Edward VIII Gilt RH, R.H.		George VI Gilt RH, R.H.	Kings Crown Service Cap Gilding Metal	Elizabeth II Gilt RH, R.H.
4	Edward VIII Gilt RH, R.H.	Edward VIII Indian General Service	Edward VIII Guards Blazer	Kings Crown General Service Cap	Victorian Military Wardens
5	George VI Mounted Gilt Staff	Kings Crown Small Plastic Veg.	Kings Crown Large Plastic Veg.	George VI Indian General Service Lapel	George VI CMP, RMP, MPSC Large
6	George V Mounted Gilt Staff	Kings Crown General Service Cap	George VI Large Gilt Staff	George VI Small Gilt Staff	George VI Large Gilt Staff
		RH, R.H. Royal Household			
7	George VI CMP, RMP, MPSC Small	George VI Cap White Metal Silver	George VI CMP, RMP, MPSC Small Gilded Metal also in Chrome		George VI Small White Metal also in Chrome
8	Elizabeth II RMP Cap White Metal		George VI Small White Metal		George VI CMP, RMP, MPSC Cap style Silver
9	Elizabeth II RMP Cao Gilding Metal		Elizabeth II RMP Cap AA		Elizabeth II RMP Small AA
10	Elizabeth II MPSC Large AA		Elizabeth II MPSC Small AA		Elizabeth II MPSC Cap AA

A

B

C

D

E



1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

12

THE HISTORY of the MILITARY PRISON STAFF (MPS), MILITARY PRISON STAFF CORPS (MPSC) & the MILITARY PROVOST STAFF CORPS (MPSC) BUTTONS 1865 to 1960.

1. **Large.** 1inch. 25mm. 40 Ligne. **Small.** 5/8thinch.19mm. 24 Ligne. **Cap.** 9/16thinch.14mm. 22 Ligne.

There is no complete equal comparison of the three lists, as they are subject to manufactures tolerances/variations.

2. From 1865 to 1871 the Staff of the Military Prisons wore a 'Cast' fixed shank 'Curved' White metal and sometimes Silver buttons, they were 17mm in diameter [The old Coatee size was 22mm]; with a central Victorian Crown, an outer 'Raised Rim' with MILITARY above and PRISON below the Crown all on a 'Plain Field'.

3. This was to change in 1871 to 1901 when the MPS Warders were allowed to wear the 'Convex' Victorian General Service (GS) button, a 25mm in diameter, with the Queens Royal Arms on a plain Field; this was to be used by most of the then Corps & Regiments. [This button was in yellow brass until 1881 when all military buttons and badges were made in Gilding metal.]

4. After the death of Queen Victoria in 1901 the buttons were to change, the Kings Royal Arms was to replace the Queens Royal Arms; the only thing that had changed was the Crown again this was worn by most of the Corps and Regiments. The 1st Queens Crown was the Victorian Crown this was to be replaced with the Imperial or Tudor Crown (1) in 1902, this was not to change again until 1952 when the St Edward's Crown (2) was used by Elizabeth II; from then on the Crowns were referred to as the 1 'Kings Crown'. and 2. 'Queens Crown'.

5. In 1901 to 1910 a further button was introduced, no history has been found to imply that this was taken into use by the MPSC/CMP; it is recorded that the Garrison Staff (GS) wore this button and as the MPSC/CMP were at times controlled by the GS this may be where some confusion has originated from. The Edward VII gilding metal 'convex' with 'collapsible' shank button has been identified in small and large sizes, this button has also been identified in 'Gilt' with mounted Cipher for Senior Staff Officers. No cap button in gilding metal has been identified so it is accepted that the GS cap button was used, there has been a cap button sized 'Gilt' button identified but the use may have been worn as cuff or waistcoat buttons for the Royal Household and Mess Dress.

6. February 1924 to 1936: George V. A MPSC/CMP 'convex' with 'collapsible' shank buttons has been identified this in small and large sizes and was to replace the GS uniform buttons, but; the GS cap buttons were retained until 1946. Both Corps's buttons were identical. It is recorded that some MPSC Warrant Officers wore this button in Bronze, this is confirmed by photographs held in the MPSC A archives.

7. 1936 to November 1936: Edward VIII. A single MPSC/CMP 'convex' with 'collapsible' shank buttons has been identified, but; no history of its use has been found or identified. They have been further identified as Royal Household buttons these have been identified/found in gilding metal, the difference between the two; the 'military' button is 'die folded' to join the front to rear and cast Gilt 'royal household' button is 'spun' to join the front to rear. Both Corps's buttons recorded as identical.

8. 1936 to 1952: George VI. A MPSC/CMP/RMP 'convex' with 'fixed' and 'collapsible' shanks buttons have been identified. They were available in gilding metal, white metal, chrome, anodised aluminium (AA) and Gilt. Both Corps's buttons identical. From 1946 to 1952 both of the Corps's

cap buttons were to change GS button to a 'convex' with 'fixed' shank buttons with a George VI Cipher with Crown on a 'plain' field, available in Silver, gilding metal, white metal and AA 1952 to 2022: Elizabeth II. A MPSC and RMP 'convex' with 'fixed' and 'collapsible' shank button's has been identified both Corps's buttons have their own 'die' raised design on a 'plain' field. They were available in gilding metal, white metal, chrome, AA and Gilt; MPSC type only shown to the right.

2022: Charles III.

9. From 1901 to 1952 all of the Royal Household (RH) buttons had been produced in Gilt in 12mm, 16mm & 22mm sizes, the buttons had the Royal Ciphers with an inner raised outer Circle on a plain Field; all produced by Pitt & Co London and all 'spun' to join the front casting to the rear casting with fixed shank. *'Edward VII, George V, Edward VIII, George VI & Elizabeth II'*, were; the five Royal Ciphers used from 1902 to 2022. Over this period all of these Gilt buttons had at times been incorrectly advertised as MPSC Officers buttons, although the Ciphers had been the image of all the MPSC Badges worn over those 120 years; the MPSC badges and buttons had been mostly produced in Gilding metal. *(RH button. Sizes: Large 24mm, Small 18mm, Cuff/Waistcoat 8mm. All subject to manufacturers tolerances.) [But, one in Gilt manufactured by J. R. Gaunt has been identified with the George VI cipher in polished gilt; the same as the MPSC's Officers cap badge could this be the Officers first button?]*

10. There had been a further set of buttons again issued over the same time period in all three sizes and had been for Senior Ranked Staff Officers, these also had been Gilt in all three sizes the button manufactured by Firmin and J. R. Gaunt the only difference was to be instead of a 'plain' Field they had a 'Horizontal Hatched Field' and a large outer raised Circular rim. Again the front and rear castings were 'spun' to join them together.

11. After 1945 a further metal was introduced for the Military buttons, Anodised Aluminium (AA) referred to as 'Stay Bright'; a none-clean finish but it wore quickly on the 'high-lights' and was unpopular for some time. By 1990 the preferences had done a complete reversal and the Gilding metal badges was again in favour, the buttons were to remain as AA; when the disruptive pattern uniforms were introduced the 'plastic/resin buttons were used.

12. Button Manufactures found to the rear of MPSC buttons: Buttons Limited Birmingham. (T M. Crossed Sword. Back Marker.)

Edward Armfield, Firmin & Sons, J. R. Gaunt all of London. Die folded (i)

MPS buttons: Players Bros. Birmingham.

Royal Household: Pitt & Co. London. Spun. (ii)

13. *An unexplained button with an over stamped GR V Cipher with a VI from the GR VI Cipher, with no back stamp has been identifies in large and small size's, an indication that it is of Indian manufacture but a further example has been identified with a UK based manufacturer; the same over stamping is noted in ER VII and ER VIII jewellery.*

Button manufacturer terminology: 1. 'flat' or 'one piece', 2. 'curved', 3. 'convex', 4. 'half ball', 5. 'bullet' & 'ball buttons'.

Construction terminology: i, 'die-struck raised design', ii. 'two-piece or two-part button with shank', Shanks: can be fixed or collapsible.

Die struck rim with badge & cipher or device separate: 'mounted'.

Field terminology: 'plain field', 'finely lined field', 'deep incisions or grooved field'.

Dan Cowley. 17 April 2023.

Button Sizes



Buttons came in three sizes, depending on the use and not all buttons were issued in the various sizes.

1. **Large**, 25mm. 40 Ligne.
2. **Small** 19mm. 24 Ligne.
3. **Cap**. 14mm. 22 Ligne

There were also different methods of manufacture, which were:

1. **Flat** (or One-Piece)
2. **Curved**
3. **Convex**
4. **Half Ball**
5. **Bullet & Ball Buttons**

1

Victorian Universal Pattern - Queen's Crown

1871 to 1901



28th Aug 1871 Victorian Universal Pattern Button (General Service Button)

The Military Prison Wardens authorised to wear this button on 14th Nov 1871

This was followed by the General Service Button with Kings Crown 1901 - 1937

Military Provost Service Collector Notes

This was to change in 1871 to 1901 when the MPS Warders were allowed to wear the 'Convex' Victorian General Service (GS) button, a 25mm in diameter, with the Queens Royal Arms on a plain Field; this was to be used by most of the then Corps & Regiments. [This button was in yellow brass until 1881 when all military buttons and badges were made in Gilding metal.]

Denzil I Cowley

Victorian Universal Pattern - Queen's Crown

1871 to 1901



28th Aug 1871 Victorian Universal Pattern Button (General Service Button)

The Military Prison Wardens authorised to wear this button on 14th Nov 1871

This was followed by the General Service Button with Kings Crown 1901 - 1937

Military Provost Service Collector Notes

This was to change in 1871 to 1901 when the MPS Warders were allowed to wear the 'Convex' Victorian General Service (GS) button, a 25mm in diameter, with the Queens Royal Arms on a plain Field; this was to be used by most of the then Corps & Regiments. [This button was in yellow brass until 1881 when all military buttons and badges were made in Gilding metal.]

Denzil I Cowley

Edward VII Senior Officers Colonel & Above

1901 to 1910



Gilt

Military Provost Service Collector Notes

In 1901 to 1910 a further button was introduced, no history has been found to imply that this was taken into use by the MPSC/CMP; it is recorded that the Garrison Staff (GS) wore this button and as the MPSC/CMP were at times controlled by the GS this may be where some confusion has originated from. The Edward VII gilding metal 'convex' with 'collapsible' shank button has been identified in small and large sizes, this button has also been identified in 'Gilt' with mounted Cipher for Senior Staff Officers. No cap button in gilding metal has been identified so it is accepted that the GS cap button was used, there has been a cap button sized 'Gilt' button identified but the use may- have been worn as cuff or waistcoat buttons for the Royal Household and Mess Dress.

Denzil I Cowley



Gilt

Military Provost Service Collector Notes

1936 to November 1936: Edward VIII. A single MPSC/CMP 'convex' with 'collapsible' shank buttons has been identified, but; no history of it's use has been found or identified.

They have been further identified as Royal Household buttons these have been identified/found in gilding metal, the difference between the two: the 'military' button is 'die folded' to join the front to rear and cast Gilt 'royal household' button is 'spun' to join the front to rear. Both Corps's buttons recorded as identical.

Denzil I Cowley



Gilding Metal

Military Provost Service Collector Notes

1936 to November 1936: Edward VIII. A single MPSC/CMP 'convex' with 'collapsible' shank buttons has been identified, but; no history of it's use has been found or identified.

They have been further identified as Royal Household buttons these have been identified/found in gilding metal, the difference between the two: the 'military' button is 'die folded' to join the front to rear and cast Gilt 'royal household' button is 'spun' to join the front to rear. Both Corps's buttons recorded as identical.

Copy of button held in the MPSC Collection

Denzil I Cowley