



**Ever wonder why
enlisted Marines
wear "chevrons"
as part of their rank insignia?**

"Chevron" is French for rafter or root, which is what a chevron looks like--two straight lines meeting at an angle just as rafters do.

They seem to have originated in the 12th century, in the wood or iron bars used to fasten together or strengthen portions of shields, according to Naval History and Heritage Command.

The chevron was a basic part of the colorful and complicated science of Heraldry, the coats of arms of knights, barons and kings appearing on their shields.

French soldiers started wearing cloth chevrons with the points up on their coat sleeves in 1777 as length-of-service and good conduct badges. Some British units also used them to show length of service. In 1803, the British began using chevrons with the points down as rank insignia.

Today, enlisted Marines wear chevrons on the sleeves of their dress blues, starting with privates first class.

