

Letter Carriers' Uniform: Service Stars

In 1897, regulations authorized the use of stripes on the coat sleeve to recognize long service -- one stripe for every five years. In 1899, stars replaced the stripes, as follows:

five years' service	one black silk star
ten years' service	two black silk stars
fifteen years' service	one red silk star
twenty years' service	two red silk stars
twenty-five years' service	one silver star
thirty years' service	two silver stars
thirty-five years' service	one gold star
forty years' service	two gold stars

In 1913, forty-five years after uniforms were first authorized, postal regulations specified that forty-five years' service were to be designated by three gold stars.

In 1955, when uniform trim changed from black to maroon, the black stars were changed to maroon. The 1957 *Personnel Handbook* provided the following schedule:

five years' service	one maroon silk star
ten years' service	two maroon silk stars
fifteen years' service	three maroon silk star
twenty years' service	four maroon silk stars
twenty-five years' service	one silver star
thirty years' service	two silver stars
thirty-five years' service	one gold star
forty years' service	two gold stars
forty-five years' service	three gold stars
fifty years' service	four gold stars



The two silver stars on these coat sleeves indicate the carrier had thirty years' service.

National Postal Museum, Smithsonian Institution™, 2001. Bill Lommel, photographer

The same schedule was listed in the 1975 *Personnel Handbook*, though the use of service stars and substitute bars was proclaimed optional, and the maroon stars and substitute bars were changed to dark blue.

In 1988, the *Employee & Labor Relations Manual* specified that only silver stars and gold stars be worn – one silver star for every five years of service up to 30 years and one gold star for every five years of service beginning at 35. This remained in effect through 2002.