

## >>The National Security Agency Insignia

In 1965, LTG Marshall S. Carter, USA, Director NSA, directed a device be designed to represent the National Security Agency. The approved insignia is shown here and contains much symbolism.

The white semicircle border displays the words National Security Agency around the top and United States of America around the bottom separated on either side by a five pointed silver star. The shape of the insignia, a circle, represents perpetuity of its continuance, the symbol of eternity.

In a blue field, an American eagle, with wings inverted, is the centerpiece of the device. In heraldry, the eagle is a symbol of courage, supreme power and authority. Use of the eagle in the NSA insignia symbolizes the national scope of the mission of the Agency. The eagle faces its right, the direction of peace (facing left would symbolize war).

The dexter and sinister talons of the bird clutch a silver key. The key in the eagle's talons, representing the key to security, evolved from the emblem of St. Peter the Apostle and his power to loose and to bind. It also symbolizes the mission to protect and gain access to secrets.

The breast of the eagle boasts a chief blue escutcheon, supported by paleways of thirteen pieces of red and white. The Escutcheon, or Shield, placed on the breast of the eagle is a very ancient mode of bearing. A description of the Escutcheon, taken from that of the Great Seal of the United States, explains that "the escutcheon is composed of the chief and pale, the two most honorable ordinaries (common figures). The pieces, paly, represent the several states all joined in one solid compact entire, supporting a chief, which unites the whole and represents Congress."



### History of the Insignia