

Heraldry of the College

By Dr Lee Kheng Hock, Executive Director, CFPS

Since the dawn of history, groups of individuals, tribes and nations with a common cause would adopt a symbol around which they would rally and be distinguished from other powerful social groups. They often prove critical in the heat and confusion of battle.

This custom reached its most elaborate development in Europe during the Middle Ages. These elaborate symbols were eventually used to mark a warrior's armor and his surcoat, which was the garment he wore over his suit of mail. From this use comes the expression "coat of arms." No one knows when was the first time that coats of arms were used but there are indications that they began to take definite form in the time of the crusades. As art flourished and artisans became more skillful these insignia became decorative and were worn outside the warrior's coat of mail.

Originally, the coat of arms were not hereditary. They gradually became so and were recognized as evidence of the wearer's noble birth. Starting with ecclesiastical bodies and later with the mediaeval guilds, the use of heraldry soon spread beyond the personal use of knights to the corporate use of institutions and municipalities - one of its most frequent uses in the modern world.

Our College crest or coat of arms was instituted at the founding of our College in 1971. It was designed by Dr Koh Eng Soo who described the symbolism of the crest.



The original drawing of the College Crest by Dr Koh Eng Soo circa 1971. The drawing was donated to the College archives by Dr Koh Eng Kheng, Past President of the College.

Each day as we ride into battle in our 4 wheeled aluminium chariots, not unlike the knights of yore on their 4 hooved sturdy steeds, we should perhaps reflect on the badge of our vocation and be encouraged to stay true to the cause.

"The upper portion of the badge of the College consists of a golden lion in a passant stance superimposed on the chief which is red in colour.

The lion represents our nation of Singapore. Red is the colour of blood which is the precious liquid on which life depends and which is our mission to save.

The lower portion of the badge consists of a green cross superimposed on a white shield. The green cross symbolizes the humanitarian mission of our College. White is the colour of purity which is our aim.

On the green cross is superimposed an open book and a caduceus. The open book represents knowledge and continued learning and the caduceus is the recognized symbol for the art of healing."