

### What Do The Coloured Unit Badge Colours Mean?

Whether, Artillery, Engineers, Infantry, Light Horse, Medical, Pioneers and so on. Every unit had its own colour patch which was worn on the tunic of each of its members. Here is a sketch of the colours worn by many of our Fallen.

In the text below, there are copies of photos of plaques in Hobart, dedicated to the [Bruford](#) brothers. They both show a purple and blue diamond shaped symbol. This designates the 26<sup>th</sup> Battalion; the particular unit they served in. (As also, did [Lee](#).)



#### **26th Infantry Battalion (Qld and TAS) [7th Brigade]**

The diamond signifying the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division comprised of 12 battalions, in 3 brigades. Of these, the **blue** designates the 7<sup>th</sup> Brigade and the **purple** indicates that it is the 2<sup>nd</sup> of the 4 battalions, comprising it.

By looking at such a patch on a digger's shoulder, the initiated, thereby knew his unit. This system continued through the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War; fell out of use and was re-adopted in 1987. Today, if one sees a digger with a slough hat, on the right side of it on the "puggaree" (hatband), will be this unit designation. It often thus, can indicate a unit history, way back to WWI.

Following this system again, for some more of the Old Boys;

Take for example, the *First Brigade*. Being a NSW unit, one can list a number of ASC members on its strength. This comprised 4 Battalions, each of roughly 1,000 men. These were included among the 12 battalions, in the 3 brigades comprising the First Division. The Divisions shape was a rectangle and a quarter of our fallen Old Boys served in it:



#### **1st Infantry Battalion (NSW) [1st Infantry Brigade]**

**McKell**



#### **2nd Infantry Battalion**

**Scott.**



#### **3rd Infantry Battalion**

**Holl, Middleton, Munckton,**



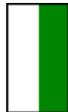
#### **4th Infantry Battalion**

**Lewin, McPhillamy (also 19<sup>th</sup>), H. Thompson (also in 20<sup>th</sup> 56<sup>th</sup>) \*\***

So, one could tell from which brigade (**green**) and the standard *black, purple, brown (chocolate)* and *white*, for the respective battalions in it.

(\*\* After Gallipoli, the AIF was "doubled" by halving the men in the existing units and sending "the other half" to the new formations. Reinforcements made up the numbers. So, half of the veteran 4<sup>th</sup> battalion was sent to the new 56<sup>th</sup> Battalion.

It was thus possible for a soldier to serve in various units for this and other reasons.



#### **56th Infantry Battalion [NSW 14th Infantry Brigade]**

**Denny, H. Thompson (4<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>)**

Note same colours, but with the 5<sup>th</sup> Division shape, simply being turned on its end.

At the expense of going too far into this detail, readers might be interested in another couple of remarks:

Old Boys were also represented, for example, in two further NSW units in 2<sup>nd</sup> Division. This, in turn, was designated by a diamond shape:



**17th Infantry Battalion [NSW 5th Infantry Brigade]**  
**Moore, Pearson, J.Thompson.**



**19th Infantry Battalion**  
**Blacket, McManamey, McPhillamy (also 4<sup>th</sup>) Clunies-Ross.**



**20th Infantry Battalion**  
**Richards, Thompson (also 4<sup>th</sup> 56<sup>th</sup>)**



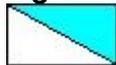
The 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade is today, a Reserve unit with headquarters at Holsworthy.

Three (1, 2, 5) of the 5 WW1 infantry divisions have been mentioned above. Let us add a battalion from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division. It had an egg shape. ("Eggs a cook" was an expression taken from the hawkers of Cairo and used as a nickname).



**35th Infantry Battalion (NSW [9th Infantry Brigade])**  
**Day (also 13<sup>th</sup>)**

Before leaving this section, one should point out the number of Old Boys who were in Light Horse units. Not surprising from a "bush" school. These included:



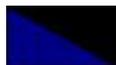
**1<sup>st</sup> Light Horse Regiment (NSW)**  
**Oakes**



**6th Light Horse Regiment (NSW)**  
**Barton, Carter, Denny, Smith (in 6th at Anzac)**



**7th Light Horse Regiment (NSW)**  
**Kendall, Roberts (at Anzac).**



**12th Light Horse Regiment (NSW)**  
**McIntosh, Roberts, Smith.**

Here again, the system works the same. Light Horse units had their rectangle diagonally divided with the brigade colour at bottom and the "regiment." (Which was roughly, the same as an infantry battalion). The rectangle shape indicated a unit in the Australian Mounted Division.

(Acknowledgement that the above colour patches copied from Ross Mallet's, "First A.I.F. Order of Battle" Such illustrations are also available from other sources.)