

APPENDIX 4

A.I.F. COLOUR PATCHES—MAY 1941

THIS chart attempts to represent the colour patches of the principal corps and divisional units in the A.I.F. at the time when organisation of the divisions and brigades had been stabilised. It would have been beyond its scope to include the colour patches of all units of the Australian Army at all times; and indeed at present no accurate record of them exists.













When the Second A.I.F. was formed the principle governing the allotment of unit colour patches was that the units should wear the patches of corresponding units of the old A.I.F., but on a grey background to distinguish A.I.F. units from militia. The Army asked the Australian War Memorial to provide examples of the colour patches of the old A.I.F., and it did so; but some of the colours were faded or the dyes poor; and to this day there may still be men who maintain that the colour patch of the 2/6th Battalion, for example, was royal blue over red, whereas, if the principle had been followed, it should have been purple over the brigade colour.











One complication that had to be overcome in the preparation of the drawing was the failure of one of the principal authorities—a tome of some hundreds of pages of line drawings compiled by the Branch of the Master-General of the Ordnance—to distinguish between right and left hand colour patches. Thus these drawings were not helpful where the colours were divided by a line which departed from the horizontal. Another was produced by the formation in England of the 25th Brigade which at the outset chose its own patches and, in the case of the headquarters and the 2/31st and 2/33rd Battalions, wore those patches for over five years—although they were entirely different from the ones laid down in the authority above. (One result of this was that for a period of about two years the 24th and 25th Brigade headquarters units wore identical colour patches; until, in 1942, General Morshead sought and gained approval for a 9th Divisional colour patch which took the shape of a "T", and was in fact intended to commemorate that division's service in Tobruk.) Other complications were the result of differing interpretations by individual unit commanders. Cavalry units, for example, are unanimous that their patches were based on the Royal Tank Corps colours, which are interpreted as "Through mud and blood to the green fields beyond"; according to one cavalry commander acceptance of this principle entailed placing the brown of the colour patch to the front, but according to another, who assumed an advance from rear to front, it entailed placing them in the opposite order. "No gunner worth his salt ever wore his colour patch except with the red to the front" (representing the flash from a gun barrel followed by the blue smoke), declared a 9th Division artillery sergeant—but he could not remember whether the left-hand patch was cut from 2 o'clock to 8 o'clock or 10 o'clock to 4 o'clock.














Wherever doubt was felt about the accuracy of a design opinions were obtained from one or more former members of the unit.

INFANTRY

6 Div H.Q. 	H.Q. 	H.Q. 	H.Q. 
	2'1 Bn 	2'5 Bn 	2'4 Bn 
	2'2 Bn 	2'6 Bn 	2'8 Bn 
	2'3 Bn 	2'7 Bn 	2'11 Bn 

7 Div H.Q. 	H.Q. 	H.Q. 	H.Q. 
	2'9 Bn 	2'14 Bn 	2'25 Bn 
	2'10 Bn 	2'16 Bn 	2'31 Bn 
	2'12 Bn 	2'27 Bn 	2'33 Bn 

8 Div H.Q. 	H.Q. 	H.Q. 	H.Q. 
	2'18 Bn 	2'21 Bn 	2'26 Bn 
	2'19 Bn 	2'22 Bn 	2'29 Bn 
	2'20 Bn 	2'40 Bn 	2'30 Bn 

9 Div H.Q. 	H.Q. 	H.Q. 	H.Q. 
	2'13 Bn 	2'28 Bn 	2'23 Bn 
	2'15 Bn 	2'32 Bn 	2'24 Bn 
	2'17 Bn 	2'43 Bn 	2'48 Bn 

**LEFT HAND
PATCHES**

DIVISIONAL UNITS

	6 Div	7 Div	8 Div	9 Div
Cavalry				
Artillery				
Engineers				
Signals				
A.A.S.C.				
Medical				
Prov. Coy				
Div. Vehicle Signs				

Example of 9 Div colour patch showing change in design.



CORPS UNITS & OTHERS

	2/1 M.G. Bn	2/2 M.G. Bn	2/3 M.G. Bn	2/4 M.G. Bn
H.Q. I AUSTRALIAN CORPS				
	2/1 Pnr Bn	2/2 Pnr Bn	2/3 Pnr Bn	2/4 Pnr Bn
Vehicle Sign	Aust. Gen. Hosp.	C.C.S.	Postal	Ordnance
	<i>(Distinguishing rectangle inset)</i>		<i>(Distinguishing circle inset)</i>	
			<i>(Base units distinguished by square inset)</i>	