

WORLD WAR I UNIFORMS and what they mean



Uniform – Australian Light Horse 1914-1918

Our Sub Branch is proud to be able to display an original uniform worn by one of the mounted soldiers of the Australian Light Horse 1914-1918.

The distinctive uniform is instantly recognisable beginning with the famous Australian slouch hat adorned with badge, chinstrap, hatband and feathers. The Service Dress jacket (complete with buttons and badges) was worn with riding breeches. The dress jacket was secured with a Leather belt with leather pouches 2×10 round & 2×15 round.

This particular uniform also comprises of a haversack with shoulder strap, a water bottle with leather carrier and shoulder strap. The distinctive Light Horse Bandolier (some of which carried up to 90 rounds of ammunition) has 9 pouches for Cal .303-in ammunition. The uniform is completed with leather leggings (Stowassar Pattern), and dark tan leather boots.

The Sub Branch was successful in securing the purchase of this uniform. You will see this uniform proudly displayed in a cabinet to the left hand side as you ride the Services Club escalator to the first floor of the Services Club.



Service Dress Jacket and Jodhpurs Army, WWI

Further, as part of the Sub Branch's World War I uniform collection, a uniform tunic known as the "jacket service dress" worn by the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) with khaki cord breeches is also displayed. This jacket service dress would have been worn over a soft grey collarless flannel shirt and underclothes consisting of a vest and drawers.

(By way of background, the Australian War Memorial records show that the 9th Battalion was among the first infantry units raised for the AIF during the First World War. It was the first battalion recruited in Queensland, and with the 10th, 11th and 12th Battalions it formed the 3rd Brigade.

The battalion was raised within weeks of the declaration of war in August 1914 and embarked just two months later. After preliminary training, the battalion sailed to Egypt, arriving in early December. The 3rd Brigade was the covering force for the ANZAC landing on 25 April 1915, and so was the first ashore at around 4.30 am. The battalion was heavily involved in establishing and defending the front line of the ANZAC beachhead. It served at ANZAC until the evacuation in December 1915.)

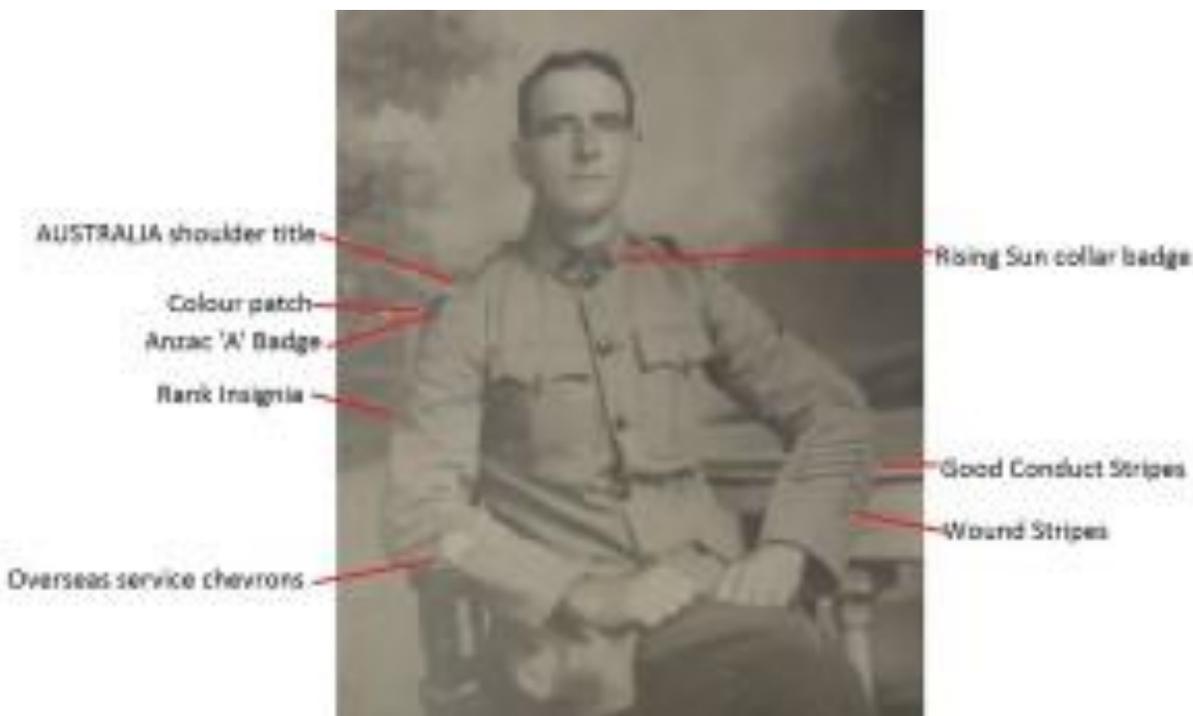
This particular jacket service dress displays the rank insignia of a Lance Corporal, Signaller. The colour patch denotes this uniform as having been worn by a 9th Battalion Australian Imperial Force (AIF) soldier. You will note the metal shoulder badges denoting the Australian Infantry (INF) and the metal Rising Sun collar badges.

The Australian War Memorial Website explains in March 1916, AIF Orders announced that the only badges to be worn by Australians were hat and collar badges, unit colour patches, badges of rank and the curved metal titles 'AUSTRALIA' on the shoulder straps. Some months later approval was given for another badge; the wound stripe. This was a strip of narrow gold Russia braid, two inches in length, worn perpendicularly on the left sleeve of the jacket to mark each occasion a soldier was wounded badly enough to be evacuated from the front line.

The jacket displayed by the Sub Branch has one Wound Badge cloth stripe, which means the wearer was wounded badly enough to be evacuated from the front line one time. It also displays a red white and blue ribbon of the 1914-15 Star which means that the wearer of this uniform saw service in a theatre of war before 1916. This Other Rank's (OR's) Army uniform was donated to the Kedron-Wavell Sub Branch RSL Inc and is on display in the Voyager Centre Memorabilia Display.

A link to the Australian War Memorial blog containing information about the AIF, its uniform and badges is below.

<https://www.awm.gov.au/blog/2014/07/31/australian-imperial-force-aif-badges-1914-1918/>



Australian War Memorial blog post of RC10118 Lance Corporal Albany Varney, 12th Light Horse Regiment, showing location of badges on his uniform