

United States Army Unit Patches

A shoulder sleeve insignia/embroidered patch first used by U.S. Army during World War I. The Army is unique among the U.S. Armed Forces: requires all soldiers to wear the patch of their headquarters as part of their military uniforms. The patch is worn on upper left shoulders of all U.S. Army uniforms. Patches worn on the right shoulder on Army uniforms denote wartime service. AKA; Combat Patch. A recent change requires that the combat patch, when worn on dress blue uniform is a metal pin type patch that is worn on the upper right jacket pocket. Initially, patches were bright colors. Because of the risk to soldier in combat, field uniforms were changed to a subdued pattern in 1970. In World War I, the 81st Infantry Division "Wildcat" was the first U.S. Army unit authorized to wear a patch. Other divisions challenged the right of 81st soldiers to wear the patch. General Pershing ruled that the 81st could keep their patch and that other units should adopt their own unit patch most of which were hand-made. By World War II, all army units were wearing patches. The 82nd Airborne Division, which included an "AA" on its patch alluding to the "All-American" soldiers from every state. The 29th Infantry Division, "Blue and Gray" indicated soldiers from states on both sides of the Civil War.



81st Infantry Division "Wild Cats"



29th Infantry Division "Blue and Grey"

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- Patch is worn on upper left shoulders of uniforms.
- Patches/right shoulder denotes combat zone service/Combat Patch.
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