

## The Slouch Hat

What is the origin of the Famous Slouch Hat?

According to what was known years ago to the New South Wales Ordnance Department, it was born from a shortage of helmets during the South African war.



Sir Harry Chauvel traced the hat from tyrolean style first worn by the South African police and later (in the early 1890's) by the Victorian Mounted Rifle Regiment.

The first unit to top its uniform off with the slouched felt hat was the Imperial Bushmen's Corps, which was raised by public subscriptions on a federal basis in January 1900.

Military stocks were notoriously short at this transitional period of Federation, and in Adelaide, at least, that hat was simply an emergency issue.

The Poet Laureate (John Masefield) paid the following tribute to that hat:

"Instead of an idiotic cap that provided no shade to the eye, or screen for the back of the neck, that would not stay on in a wind, no help to disguise the wearer from air observation, these men (the Diggers) wore comfortable soft felt slouch hats that protected in all weather and at all time looked well."