

Sikh and Indian Australians

Teacher Resource 2: The Puggaree and other useful terms



The connection between the Indian Sikhs and the British Empire has permanently influenced an aspect of the Australian army uniform. The colonial and Australian Army felt slouch hat contains the following features:

- the Australian General Service badge ('Rising Sun') on the looped left hand side,
- a plain wool hatband, or pleated cotton band called a puggaree,
- a leather chin strap.

An Australian Army Grade 1 Slouch Hat with a pleated puggaree, a Royal Australian Engineers corps badge pinned to the front and the "Rising Sun" badge on the left.

The word puggaree ("pagri") is the Punjabi and Hindi word meaning turban or muslin scarf. It was incorporated into the hats of the British Indian Army, especially in hot, sunny areas. In 1885 the khaki hat first became part of the Australian uniform in colonial Victoria, with a three pleated puggaree. It is believed the puggaree was included because of the connection of one of the Victorian officers to the British army in Burma. The Australian Army puggaree in the 21st century has seven pleats, one for each state and one for the Australian Territories. It is worn on the slouch hat with a unit colour patch sewn on the right side and is made from khaki coloured cotton.

Differentiation Activity: Research the origin of one other symbolic aspect of the World War One AIF uniform - the rising sun, battalion colours, corps badges, puttees, medals awarded to Australian soldiers. What other countries influenced the Australian military dress?

See also

<https://www.awm.gov.au/blog/2014/07/17/australian-imperial-force-aif-headwear-1914-1918/>

<https://www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/slouch/army/>

<https://www.army.gov.au/our-history/traditions/the-slouch-hat>

<http://www.australiansikhheritage.com/the-puggaree/>

Some more useful terminology

TERM	MEANING
ANZAC	An acronym of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps. Generally now written as Anzac, except when actually referring to the actual military corps.
Anzac legend	Pride in the fighting and personal qualities of Australian forces during WW1 which unified men from across the Australian nation.
Contestability	Debate caused by varying interpretation of historical events. Historians have different interpretations of the same event because of the sources of evidence they relied on and their perspective or point of view.
AIF	Australian Imperial Forces
Battalion (AIF)	A unit of the army comprising 550 to 1000 men and led by a Lieutenant Colonel. A Brigade in WW1 was made up of four battalions.
Black Diggers	A term used to describe Indigenous Australian soldiers.
14th Sikh regiment	The Sikh infantry regiment which fought along side the Anzacs in Gallipoli.
Gurkhas	Soldiers of Nepalese nationality recruited in British and Indian Armies.
British Expeditionary Forces	Professional soldiers (regular soldiers not volunteers) which were sent to the Western Front in August/September 1914 to fight the German Army.
Indian Expeditionary Force	Indian overseas forces comprising two cavalry and two infantry divisions. Assisted British Expeditionary Forces on the Western Front.
Battery	A unit of guns and mortars grouped in the battlefield.