



900 B.C.

Sasanian Helmet

This bronze and iron helmet was worn by soldiers in the revival of the Iranian empire, specifically those personally chosen officers under Ardashir I. To say these soldiers were efficient is an understatement: they protected the ruler as he restored Achaemenid military organizations; retained Parthian cavalry; and defended Iran against Central Asiatic nomads and Roman armies all while protecting their heads during battle.

The helmet was fitted to each soldier, with a nose plate and a small opening to see so arrows that rained down on the army wouldn't penetrate the thick cover.



200 A.D.

Secutor's Helmet

The Secutors of Ancient Roman times wore a helmet that covered their entire face, leaving just two small eye-holes for visibility. This was for a good reason — Secutors were specifically trained to fight a trident-armed gladiator. The helmet had a fin-like crest (to avoid getting caught in any nets) and was made of thick metal. Because of the weight and lack of space in the helmet, Secutors had breath constrictions and had to win quickly, or else collapse of exhaustion. While this helmet was not for the claustrophobic, no doubt it saved lives in gladiator combat.



300 A.D.

Horned Helmet

Contrary to popular belief, the horned helmet was never adorned by Vikings. Germanic soldiers were among the first to 'horn' their heads in battle, specifically when fighting with bowmen in the Battle of the Milvian Bridge on October 28th in the year 312 A.D. The helmets were hand-sculpted usually from iron. While the horns didn't serve any use in battle, their purpose was to give the soldiers an imposing look while being attacked by arrows or swords.



1000 A.D.

Kabuto

Samurais didn't wear their hearts on their sleeves, but on their helmets. Intricate shapes were built on top of their headpieces depicting their adored forms of Japanese mythology including fish, cow horns, the god of longevity, places of worship or twirls of their favored silk. Their crowns were protected by a strong metal-plated bowl, with a suspended series of plates adorned with the crest of the clan to protect the neck. The reason behind the ornate style of the helmet? The samurais wanted their presence known and felt on the battlefield.



1450 A.D.

Sallet Helmet

The sallet helmet was popular in northern Europe and Hungarian armies, covering most of the head, stopping just before the tip of the nose. The thick steel helmet fit close to the head except for the 'tail' (a brim flaring from the back) which covered the back of the neck.



1808 A.D.

Deep Sea Diving Helmet

The first deep-sea diving helmet was invented by Brize Fradin, a French engineer. The helmet was connected to a low-pressure backpack air container. It couldn't go very far beneath the surface, but this helmet paved the way for safe, deep-sea diving travels — especially in 2005, when a 52-year-old South African, "Nuno" Gomes set the Guinness World Record for deep-sea scuba diving at 1,044 feet beneath the ocean surface.



1842 A.D.

Pickelhaube

This spiked helmet, introduced by Frederick III, was worn by German military, firefighters and police. The helmet was made of leather, hardened by boiling, with a glossy finish and an ornamental front plate which denoted where the regiment was from. While ornamentally these helmets were appreciated, in trench warfare it was soon discovered the Pickelhaube wasn't as protective — the leather was no match for shell fragments and shrapnel. The helmet lives on, having influenced the design of the British custodian helmet, worn by police in England and Wales to this day.



1900 A.D.

Bike Helmet

Nicknamed "hairnets" by bikers, the first bike helmets were made out of strips of padded leather with a ring of leather around the head and a wool patch at the crown. While they cushioned impact from a potential fall or crash, the hairnets did come with one major complaint: the smell. The permeable material allowed for a sweaty scent to stick. Soon enough, less-pungent plastic helmets were invented with more protection, like the one pictured above.

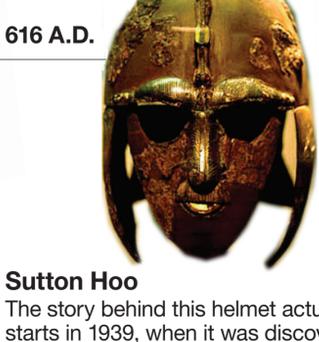
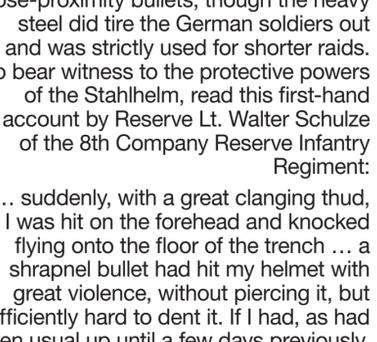


1915 A.D.

Stahlhelm

This steel helmet was used by the Imperial German Army throughout World War I. Its coal shuttle shape had a side-mounted horn-like ventilator lugs for supporting the heavy steel brow plate. Snipers and trench-raiding soldiers used this helmet for its ability to withstand close-proximity bullets, though the heavy steel did tire the German soldiers out and was strictly used for shorter raids. To bear witness to the protective powers of the Stahlhelm, read this first-hand account by Reserve Lt. Walter Schulze of the 8th Company Reserve Infantry Regiment:

"... suddenly, with a great clanging thud, I was hit on the forehead and knocked flying onto the floor of the trench ... a shrapnel bullet had hit my helmet with great violence, without piercing it, but sufficiently hard to dent it. If I had, as had been usual up until a few days previously, been wearing a cap, then the Regiment would have had one more man killed."



616 A.D.

Sutton Hoo

The story behind this helmet actually starts in 1939, when it was discovered during an excavation that is considered one of the most magnificent archeological finds in England. The ceremonial helmet, along with armor, a lyre and silver from the Eastern Roman Empire, were found in a burial chamber of a ship. The person buried is widely believed to be Rædwald, a powerful East Anglian leader thought of as pivotal in the establishment of Christian rule in England. The headpiece, made out of six steel and bronze plates, was based on a Roman parade-helmet design used in European war combat during the Middle Ages.



1100 A.D.

Knight's Helmet

Knights in the Middle Ages made sure to hide every inch of skin behind steel, and their heads were no exception. They wore the metallic suits (as did their horses) in battle, flying colored banners to display power and distinguish themselves. The thick metallic helmet usually featured intricate carvings and decorative features, and it's only opening was a small slit to see through with a flip-up face plate. Eventually, their weighty armor proved impractical and was relegated to ceremonial duties.



1778 A.D.

Mahiole

When famed British explorer Captain James Cook visited Hawaii, he was greeted by a Kalani'ōpu'u (a high chief), who bestowed to Cook one of the highest honors by placing his mahiole feathered helmet on Cook's head. The mahiole, a helmet made from feathers of local Hawaiian birds, was traditional garb worn only by the men of the Ali'i, the chiefly class of Hawaii. Tens of thousands of feathers were required for each mahiole. Cook treasured the helmet, and it's now on display at the British Museum in London.



1836 A.D.

"New Yorker" Fireman's Helmet

Realizing the risk of falling debris and other potential head hazards, Cairns Manufacturing Company developed the protective head gear for New York City firemen that was adopted as the protective standard nationwide. The handcrafted hardened leather shell included a black chinstrap and was often engraved with the fire station company number.

1880 A.D.

Ned Kelly's Helmet

Irish-Australian bush-ranger/outlaw Ned Kelly was considered by some a hero and others an outlaw in his many protests resisting the British colonial ruling class. He was also his own blacksmith! Kelly made his very own metal helmet (and other armor) to wear during his confrontation with British police in June 28, 1880. The entire protective getup weighed in at 96 pounds.



1915 A.D.

Brodie Helmet

During the first year of WWI, soldiers went to battle putting nothing but cloth caps on their crowns, offering (as you've probably guess) little protection. That all changed when British engineer John Leopold Brodie patented the 'brodie' steel combat helmet in 1915. Each helmet was constructed from a single piece of pressed, thick sheet of steel. The helmets were delivered to the (presumably relieved) British Army troops, who gave their new hard hats a warm reception.

Photo above is an example of a U.S. Marine Corps brodie helmet.

