



The Trench Coat as we know it—long, lightweight, waterproof, usually khaki-colored—was indeed popularized in its namesake trenches of World War I, but it had already undergone a century of modifications before it reached the battlefield. Coat manufacturers began using rubberized cotton for waterproof outerwear as early as the 1820s for both military and civilian use—the most popular of these was the “mack coat,” named after creator Charles Macintosh. These mack coats were well-proofed against moisture but poorly ventilated. While they were worn by British infantrymen throughout the 1800s, the stifling fabric was less than ideal, causing the soldiers to sweat profusely—and, to make matters worse, the rubberized fabric sometimes melted in high heat. In 1853, designer John Emary developed a more breathable, stable waterproof coat under the brand name Aquascutum (from the Latin words for water and shield), its design featuring the raglan sleeves pioneered by the brand around the same time. Then Thomas Burberry—yes, that Burberry—found a way to improve even further on the waterproofing formula, this time coating individual

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