WRISTWATCH

Women began small clocks attached to bracelets—as fashion over function—after the style was invented for a Hungarian Countess in 1868 (or possibly for Napoleon's younger sister in 1810), but the wristwatch never truly gained ubiquity until after it was issued to soldiers fighting in World War I. In 1900, finding the traditional men's pocket watch increasingly impractical, Swiss watchmakers Omega began to supply simple wrist-bound timepieces to the British military for use in the Boer War. As early as 1902, advertisements touted the wristwatch as "an indispensable item of military equipment," showing the watches worn by dashing British officers. In the United States, The Hamilton Watch Company was joining the action as the official supplier to the U.S. military just in time for World War I. A few years later, after linking up with the U.S. Air Force, Hamilton debuted the Khaki pilot's watch, which became wildly popular with pilots and civilians alike. Back across the Atlantic, Louis Cartier (yes, that Cartier) designed a simple wristwatch that could be easily used by pilots, and later, drawing direct inspiration from the artillery tanks of World War I, introduced the simple, sturdy Cartier Tank watch in 1917.

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