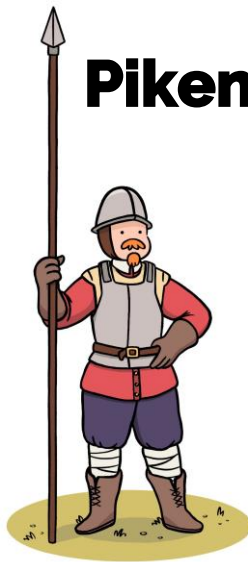


Pikeman



Pikemen were foot soldiers (infantry) armed with a pike (a long wooden pole with a metal spear on the end). They were used to defend musketeers against the cavalry. They were also useful to push against the enemy when victory was in sight. They were often placed in the middle of the infantry, with musketeers on either side of them.

Pikemen were trained to use a number of 'postures' or ways of handling the pike for different kinds of fighting. For instance, to defend against cavalry attack a pikeman would crouch down, brace the bottom of the pike shaft against his foot and point the head of the pike at the horse's breast. When attacking another infantry regiment pikes would be held horizontally at shoulder height while the soldiers advanced towards the enemy. When contact was made each side would push until one gave way.

Pikemen would have to practice these 'postures' in what was known as a 'drill' so that they could fight in a disciplined manner on the battlefield. A simple pike drill would be:

1. Shoulder your pike
2. Port your pike (hold your pike upright)
3. Advance your pike (pike dropped half way down)
4. Charge your pike (pike facing your enemy, ready to charge)

Pikemen could play a decisive role on the battlefield. For example, in June 1643, at the Battle of Adwalton Moor, the Royalist pikemen fought well, pushing their enemy back and creating gaps for the Royalist cavalry and cannons to destroy the left wing of the Parliamentarian army, and forcing them to retreat.

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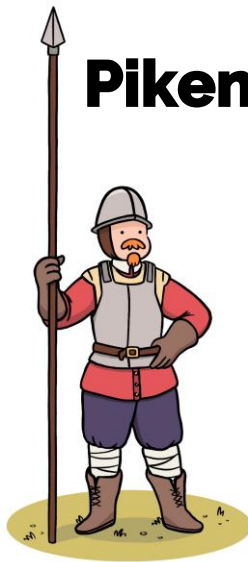


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Pikeman



Equipment

- **Pike** - Pikes were usually between 16 and 18 feet (4.8-5.4 metres long). The length of a regiment's pikes could be decisive in battle. The long wooden stave was made of ash and tapered to a point at the end to improve the weapon's balance. Long steel plates were fixed on to the thinnest end to protect it from being hacked off. At the very end of the pike was a sharp steel blade that could inflict terrible wounds.
- **Armour** - At the beginning of the war Pikemen wore heavy armour that protected them from neck to knee; a breast and back plate, a pot helmet, tassets that covered the thighs and a gorget to protect the throat. Later in the war this heavy armour fell out of use completely.
- **Pot helmet** – To protect the head. These helmets were quickly and cheaply made in two pieces and joined together with a comb down the middle. They had a brim all around which was angled up at the front to help protect the soldier from sword blows.
- **Sword** - A short sword called a tuck was used for hand-to-hand combat. Infantry swords were of lesser quality than those carried by the cavalry and used as a last resort.

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