

A GLOSSARY OF MILITARY DRESS

- Ailettes:** rectangular plates usually projected up on either side of the head and laced to the shoulders. Scholars disagree about their purpose, some believing them to be heraldic and ornamental, others holding that they protected the collar bone from downward blows. Found on fourteenth century brasses.
- Aketon (also haketon and gambeson):** a plain, quilted coat usually worn under armor.
- Arming cap:** a small, quilted, close-fitting skull cap with ear lappets and with laces that could be tied under the chin. It was worn either under or over the mail coif.
- Arming doublet:** garment worn under armor during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.
- Arming points:** straps, buckles, hinges, lynch pins, etc. that hold sections of armor in position.
- Aventail:** mail covering the neck and shoulders and attached to the bascinets; replaced c.1420 by a steel gorget.
- Baldric (bawdric):** metal studded belt, worn horizontally across the hips; mainly fourteenth century.
- Bascinet:** the characteristic conical helmet of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.
- Besagews (palettes):** plates, usually circular or oblong, protecting the armpits. Usually fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.
- Bevor (also gorget):** a piece of plate armor covering the lower part of the face and throat.
- Breastplate (cuirass):** metal plate covering the front part of the body from neck to waist. There was also a backplate. From fifteenth century onward.
- Brigandine (also cuirie, coat of plates):** small steel plates riveted to cloth or leather and worn under a surcoat or jupon, and occasionally over the thighs. Mainly fourteenth century.
- Byrnie:** (see hauberk)
- Camail:** (see aventail)
- Chausses:** mail leggings or stocking. Mainly fourteenth century.
- Coat of Plates (cuirie or brigandine):** a leather garment reinforced with metal plates and worn over the hauberk and under the surcoat or jupon. Late fourteenth and early fifteenth century.
- Cod-piece:** plate or tippet of mail protecting genitals.
- Coif:** close-fitting mail hood leaving only nose and eyes exposed, usually a part of the hauberk.
- Couters:** plates protecting the elbows of various shapes.
- Crest:** device attached to the top of the helm, presumably making the knight more easily identifiable.
- Cuir-bouilli:** leather hardened by soaking it in heated wax; early used for poleyns, sword scabbards, etc.
- Cuirie:** (see coat of plates, brigandine)
- Cuisses:** thigh defenses of metal plate.
- Dagger:** (see misericorde)
- Demi-greaves:** half plates protecting legs in raid-fourteenth century.
- Fauld:** skirt of overlapping hoops of metal worn over the hips. The hoops are called lames.
- Fluted:** grooved or ribbed.
- Foretasses:** (see tassés)
- Gauntlets:** gloves of leather or plate protecting hands and wrists.
- Gorget:** collar or throat defense of metal plate. Early fifteenth century on.
- Greaves:** plates encircling the legs below the knees.
- Guige:** narrow strap buckled over the right shoulder to support the shield. Used to mid-fourteenth century.
- Gussets:** small patches of mail stitched to underlying cloth, usually at pointed of juncture of arms, etc., at armpits and between greaves and sabatons.
- Hand-guard (cross-guard):** bar below the hilt of a sword to protect the hand.
- Hauberk (hawberk):** shirt of mail, rarely worn after 1420. The diminutive of hauberk is haubergeon.
- Haute-plece:** (see stop-rib)
- Heater-shaped:** a shield straight or slightly curved at the top with two curved sides meeting at a point at the bottom. It probably got its name because it looked like the bottom of an iron.
- Helm:** the "great" helmet that enclosed the head; flat-topped until c.1300 and worn over the coif and arming cap, it was probably padded and had a chin strap, the ends of which could be tied or buckled. On brasses, the great helm is usually shown as a headrest.

Hilt: the hand grip of a sword or dagger.

Jupon: a short, sleeveless garment, probably padded, shaped closely to the body and worn over body defenses, usually a hauberk and a coat of plates or breastplate of cuir-bouilli or metal. Late fourteenth and early fifteenth century.

Kettle-hat: a brimmed metal helmet popular c.1460.

Lames: overlapping plates, usually applied to the overlapping hoops of the fauld.

Laminated: plate strips overlapping horizontally, as on faulds and sabatons.

Lance rest: a hinged bracket riveted to the right side of a breast-plate, serving as a stop for the lance.

Mail: a defense of interlinked metal rings, each ring being linked to four others.

Misericorde: a short dagger, usually attached to the baldric or the armor on the right side and used to dispatch mortally wounded enemies. The term suggests the desire to help the wounded out of their misery.

Mitten gauntlets: mittens of mail or plate covering hands and wrists.

Palettes: (see besagews)

Pauldron: (see also spaudler), a plate protecting each shoulder, often massive by late fifteenth century.

Peascod breastplate: a bulbous breastplate with a pointed lower end. Especially late sixteenth century.

Picadils: the hemming of armor, usually seen on armor of the mid-sixteenth century onwards as protruding half-circles, especially around the tasses and pauldrons. They prevented the armor from chafing.

Placate: (also placcate, plackart), a plate or plates, often scalloped and fluted, covering the stomach and lower part of the breastplate.

Poleyns: knee defenses, early of cuir-bouilli, but by late fourteenth century onward of metal plate.

Pommel: the upper end of the hilt of a sword or dagger, often spherical.

Pourpoint: a general term for any kind of quilted defense.

Prick spurs: spiked spurs, used until mid-fourteenth century.

Rapier: a short thrusting sword; late sixteenth century onward.

Rerebraces: upper arm and shoulder defenses.

Roundels: round pieces of metal usually protective of armpits and/or elbows. See also palettes, besagews, couters.

Rowel spurs: a rider's heel goad on a star-shaped, rotating wheel.

Sabatons: plate protection for the feet, usually laminated.

Sallet (salade): a light, visored helmet shaped to protect the back of the neck and flaring at the sides.

Scabbard: the sheath housing the sword.

Side-wings: kidney-shaped plates attached to the poleyns.

Sollerets (see sabatons): long, narrow footguards brought to a sharp point.

Spaudlers (see also pauldrons): overlapping plates of metal above the rerebraces at the shoulders. After c.1450, usually called pauldrons.

Standard of mail: a mail collar encircling the neck.

Stop-rib (haute-piece): an upright flange riveted just below the neck and designed to prevent the opponent's weapon from sliding up into the throat.

Surcoat: long fabric garment worn over the armor, especially before 1350.

Tabard: a heraldic, loose garment with wide short sleeves, worn over armor. Late fifteenth and sixteenth century mainly.

Tasses (taces, tassets): plates attached to the bottom of the fauld by straps and buckles and hung over the thighs in front and back.

Trunk hose: cloth breeches, usually puffed and slashed; sometimes worn under the tasses. Sixteenth century onward when full armor tended not to be worn.

Vambraces: plate defenses for the forearms. Some writers use the term to include couters and rerebraces as well.

Visor: the moveable face guard of a helmet.