

Types of Armor

Combat

Flexibility: Very Good
Visibility: Very Good

Defense: Very Good
Weight: 45-80 pounds



HAM 2585

Consisting of over 200 individual pieces of plate steel riveted together, the combat suit with its fully articulated joints allowed the wearer to move comfortably and efficiently. If struck from his horse, a knight wearing a properly made combat suit would be able to rise from a muddy battlefield and remount his horse using his stirrups with little difficulty. The combat helmet provided adequate visibility and ventilation. The **lance rest**, a small metal support attached to the right hand side of the breastplate, allowed the knight to more easily carry and aim his lance. A combat lance was often 10-14 feet long with a sharp pointed metal end, similar to a spear.

Tournament

Flexibility: Very Poor
Visibility: Very Poor

Defense: Excellent
Weight: 80-100 pounds



HAM 2527.D

Of the three types of late medieval and early Renaissance armor, jousting armor was the heaviest and thickest made. The **joust** involved two mounted knights charging one another from opposite ends of a playing field called a **tiltyard**. Couching his lance, blunted for this purpose, the knight attempted to strike his opponent's target, the shield-like attachment on the left shoulder. With horses running at an average speed of 20 miles per hour, the jousting knight endured a combined force of a 40 mile per hour impact on his chest. The armor was designed specifically to protect the wearer from the impact of a lance and the possibility of the lance splintering. In addition to being thrown from a horse, many injuries were sustained from flying splinters entering crevices in the armor and helmet.

Decorative

Flexibility: Excellent
Visibility: Excellent

Defense: Very Poor
Weight: 20-70 pounds



HAM 698 and 420

Heavily ornate suits of armor were designed specifically for wear at court events, parades and ceremonies. These suits offered little physical protection as the more artistic design work was applied to a suit, the weaker metal became. Decorative suits of armor not only indicated that the wearer was stylish, but also wealthy. The average cost of one suit of armor being close to $\frac{1}{4}$ of a knight's yearly salary, a decorative suit of armor implied distinct financial comfort. Often a knight would choose to have only a portion of a suit completed for decorative purposes. **Etching, embossing, engraving, blueing and gilding** were some methods employed by the armorer.