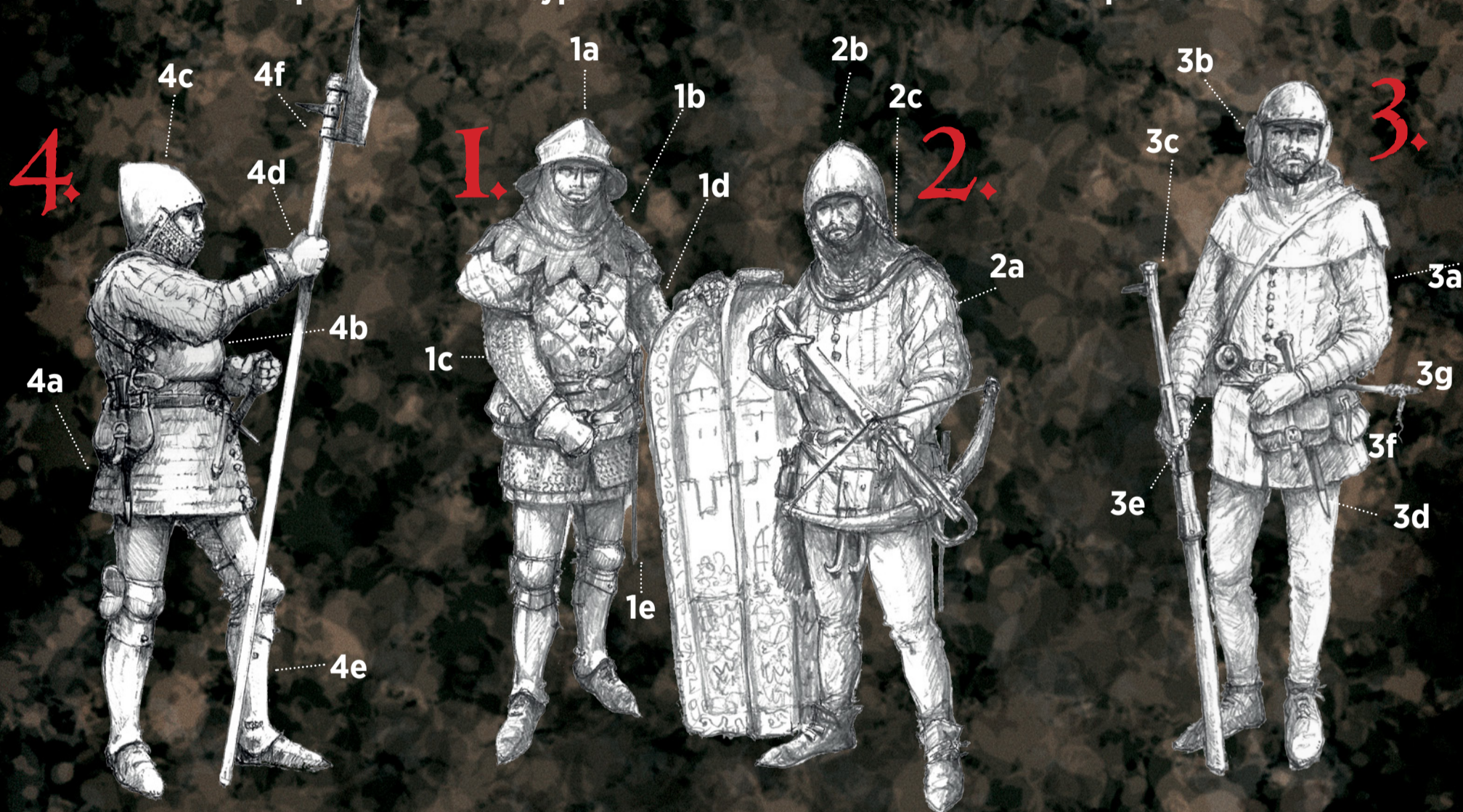


USUAL COMPOSITION OF BOHEMIAN MERCENARY TROOPS FROM 1ST HALF OF 15TH CENTURY

In 1440s and 1450s Bohemian mercenaries, though the successors of the hussite „heretical“ warriors, were frequently hired by many catholic European princes and wealthy cities. The bulk of these armies was basically composed of footsoldiers (about 90%). Cavalry (only about 10%) was formed primarily from lighter horsemen. Heavy armoured mounted men-at-arms were rather an exception. Some of typical characters of these soldiers are presented below.

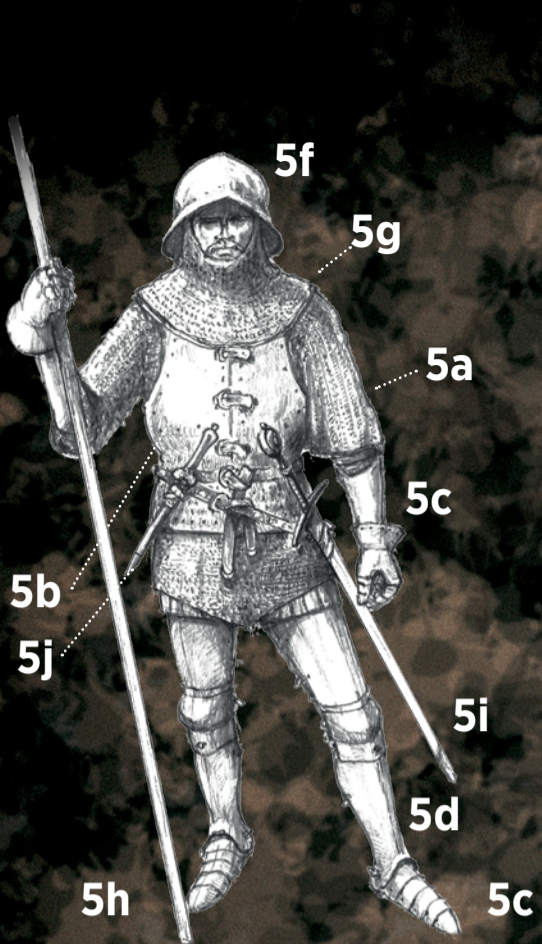


Infantry battle formation was composed mainly of billmen, pavise bearers, crosbowmen and handgunners. In defense, the formation was sometimes protected by war-wagon wall (wagenburg)

- 1. PAVISE BEARER** protects crosbowmen and handgunners against enemy bullets, bolts and arrows when reloading. He has well covered head and shoulders by broad-brimmed kettle hat (1a) and padded hood – 1b (here covered by cloth) to deflect blows coming from above. His body armour is mail shirt with long sleeves (1c) and padded jack (1d). He is armed with heavy hanger (1e).
- 2. CROSBOWMAN** is relatively lightly protected only by gambeson (2a) and open bascinet (2b) with mail aventail (2c) to keep high mobility.
- 3. HANDGUNNER** is similarly lightly protected by gambeson (3a). His helmet is iron skullcap with round earpieces (3b). He is armed with hook-gun (3c) and long dagger (3d). Note the powder flask (3e), leather bullet bag (3f) and match stick (3g) to fire the weapon.
- 4. HEAVY BILLMAN** is particularly intended to defend battle formation in close combat. His body armour is composed of short mail shirt (here not visible) under padded jack with long sleeves (4a) and breastplate (4b). He wears open bascinet with mail aventail (4c) and also plate gauntlets (4d) and full plate leg armour (4e). He is armed with bill or early halberd (4f) and with sword or hanger (4g).



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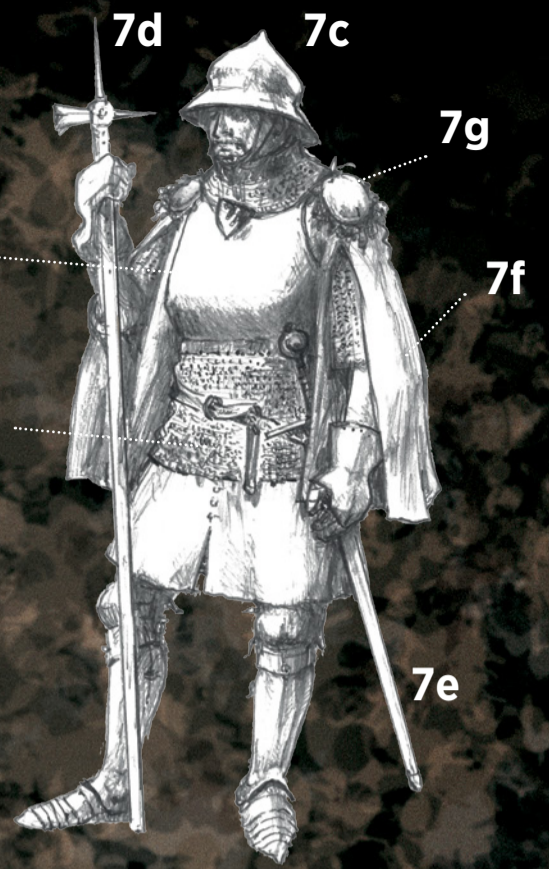
5. ARMoured PIKEMAN

is offensive element of the battle formation. He is protected by mail shirt (5a), brigandine (5b) full plate arm (5c) and leg armour (5d) included sabatons (5e). He wears deep kettle hat (5f) with mail aventail (5g). He is armed with about 3m long pike (5h) sword (5i) and dagger (5j).



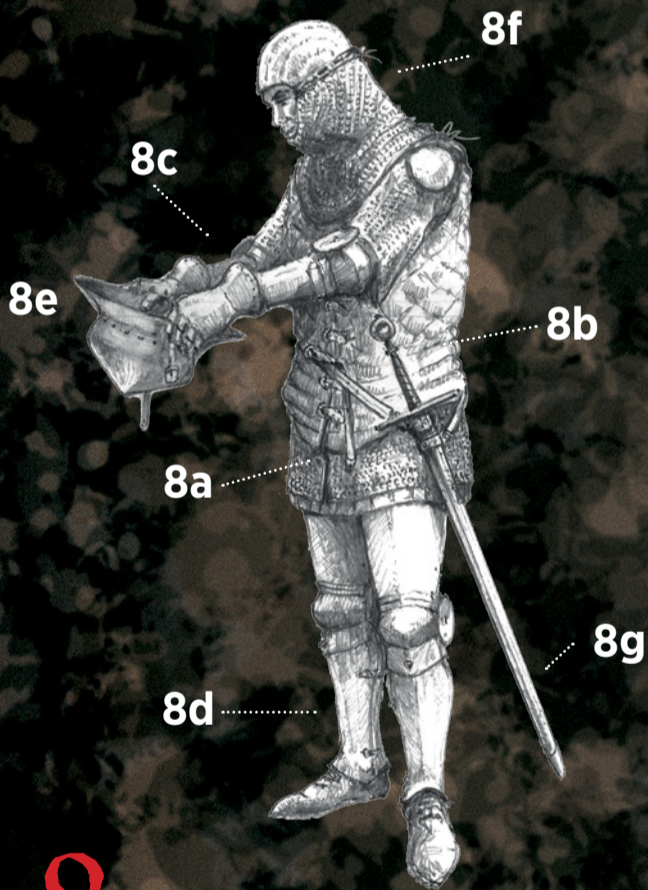
6. STANDARD BEARER

is well armoured and bears the flag of Old Town of Prague (device is open gate and three towers)



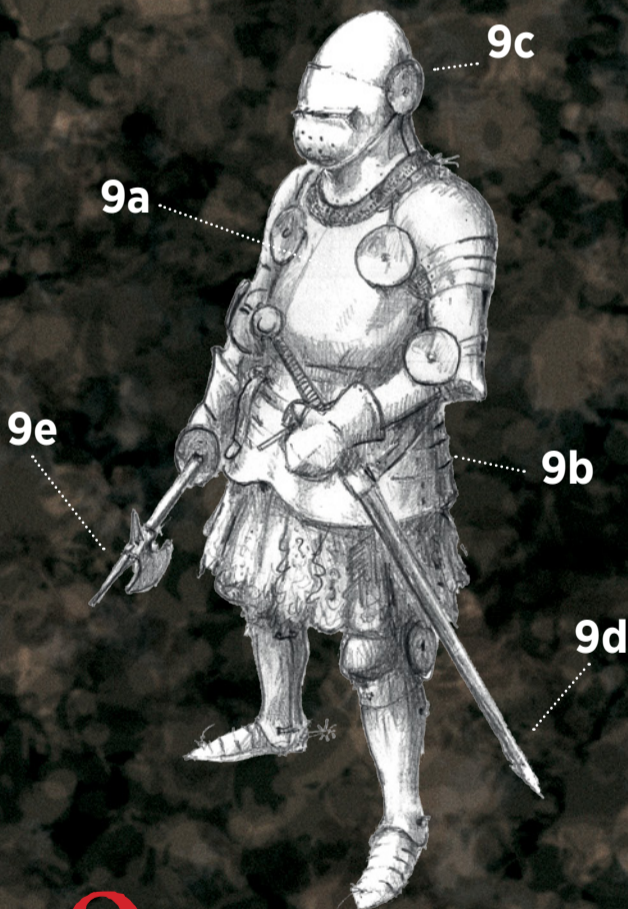
7. CAPTAIN OF FOOT

or Feldhauptmann is probably a lesser nobleman or wealthy burgher. He wears plate armour combined with ring mail with typical german „kastenbrust“ breastplate (7a) and mail skirt (7b) to protect the groin. To keep better visibility, he wears as the helmet deep kettle hat (7c) with mail collar instead of visored bascinet. He is armed with war hammer (7d) and long sword (7e). Note his waffenrock with long and broad sleeves (7f) and small iron shoulder pieces (7g).



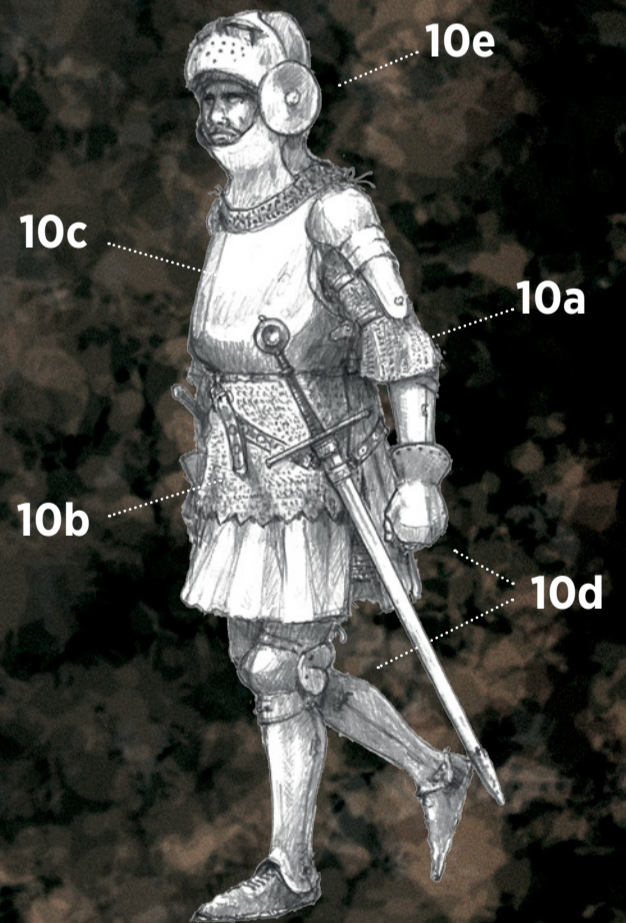
8. LIGHTER HORSEMAN

is universal soldier because he is able to fight as a mounted skirmisher as line cavalryman and, if necessary, as footsoldier as well. His transitional armour is composed of shorter mail shirt (8a), sleeveless quilted padded jack (8b) and full plate arm (8c) and leg armour (8d). His helmet is iron kettle hat (8e). Note the construction of his quilted hood with mail aventail (8f). Here he is armed only with long sword (8g), but these soldiers were often armed also with lance, small pavise or with crossbow.



9. KNIGHT IN FULL PLATE ARMOUR

is probably nobleman and comander of army. He wears typical early german full plate harness with „kastenbrust“ (9a), tonlet (9b) and grandbascinet with rondels (9c). He is armed with long sword (9d) and waraxe (9e).



10. KNIGHT IN TRANSITIONAL ARMOUR

This armour combines mail shirt (10a) and skirt (10b) with breastplate (10c) and full plate arm and leg armour (10d). Note typical early german grandbascinet with rondels (10e). The source for this figure is the relief from Lorch am Rhein, c. 1425-1430



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