

MYSTERIOUS AFAN CUDD ARMOUR AND WEAPONS

Welsh soldiers were not serfs or vassals in the same way as the Anglo-Normans. The Welsh armies which faced the invaders were based around the individual princes' and chieftains' personal bodyguards (Teulu). The rest of the force would comprise of any local men over the age of 14; this service was seen as a privilege, as opposed to Anglo-Norman soldiers who saw such service as a duty

The Teulu (literally meaning "family") were strongly armed and mounted retainers. They were armed in chainmail and helmet, and carried a shield, decorated white, yellow, silver, or blue, and lance. The size of a Welsh prince's army could vary from about 120 men to thousands for the big battles against the later Kings of England like Edward I.

Welsh blacksmiths made arms and armour; the poet Guto'r Glyn, who had been a soldier, refers to Wrexham, in north-east Wales, as a centre for making bucklers (a kind of round shield). Some were also brought into Wales from places such as Germany and Milan in Italy.



Matthew Paris' "Life of Edward the Confessor" from the 1230s
<https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/life-of-st-edward-the-confessor-ms-ee-3-59-matthew-paris-d-1259/uQEH2Dv3fldw-Q?hl=en>

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Offa of Mercia from Matthew Paris's tract on St. Alban. It is lopsided because it's been photographed straight from the book.
https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/14/Matthew_Paris_Offa_horseback.jpg

The warriors were dressed in a linen shirt (often red) and linen drawers; they covered these with a woollen cloak hanging to their knees, which was sometimes described as being "thin". Several writers say that Welsh archers wore only one shoe, with the other foot bare – if this is true, this probably allowed

them to keep a balance on rough land. The men kept their hair short; moustaches were popular, but beards were not.

The Teulu were horsemen, and dressed for battle in a similar style to the English knights, wearing chain-mail and helmets. The people who described the Welsh soldiers were usually from the Norman side, and often said they wore no armour and only thin tunics.



Matthaei Paris Chronica Maiora II, Parker Library, Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. <https://parker.stanford.edu/parker/catalog/qt808nj0703>

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Matthew Paris' picture of the battle with Herbert FitzMatthew shows this too. This might have been because the Normans, coming from France to invade, were all soldiers, while most of the Welsh soldiers were local farmers, just joining the Prince's army to defend their land.

Welsh soldiers often fought as they had done in Roman times – hiding and surprising the enemy with quick raids on foot. This way of fighting suited the hills and rough land that the Welsh knew so well.

Gerald of Wales described the fighting of the Welsh against the Normans in 1188:

“.... they fight in fields, we in woods; there armour is honourable, here it is a nuisance; they win by standing firm, we by agility....”

Text adapted from websites:

<http://www.gutorglyn.net/gutoswales/cy/index.php>

<https://www.castlewales.com/warfare.html>

<https://www.twcenter.net/forums/showthread.php?349942-Welsh-Warfare-in-The-Medieval-Period>

Book: a Mirror of Medieval Wales: Gerald of Wales and His Journey of 1188 Cadw Welsh Historic Monuments 1988



Painting by Matthew Paris 1245
Matthaei Paris Chronica Maiora II, Parker Library, Corpus Christi College,
Cambridge. <https://parker.stanford.edu/parker/catalog/qt808nj0703>

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