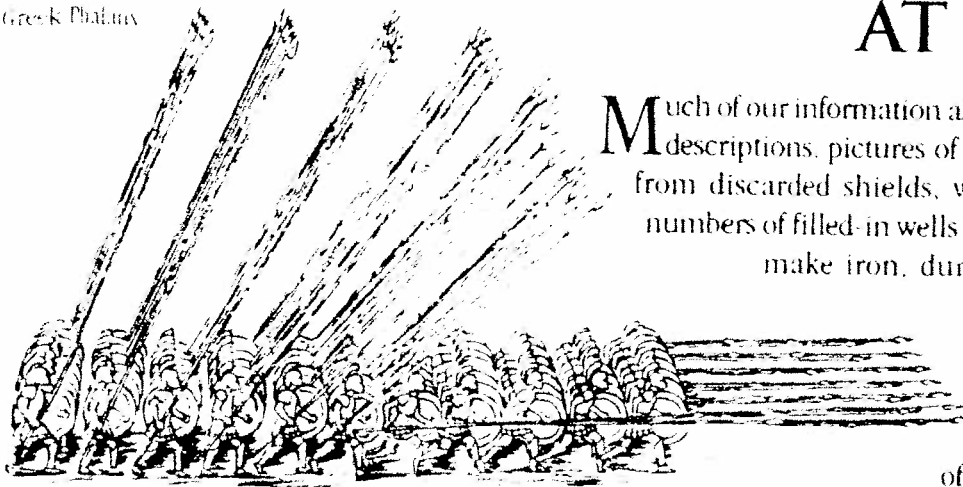


AT WAR



Much of our information about Greek soldiers comes from written descriptions, pictures of Greeks at war on painted pottery and from discarded shields, weapons and armor found in large numbers of filled-in wells at Olympia. Though the Greeks could make iron, during the Peloponnesian wars many shields, weapons and breastplates were still being made of bronze.

The main attacking formation was the phalanx, a square arrangement of foot soldiers (hoplites) armed with spears around 3 to 4 meters in length. The leading troops would hold their spears horizontally to present a moving front of spear points to the enemy, while the rear rows held their spears up to deflect enemy missiles. This formation was very effective in blocking a road or narrow mountain pass.

Cavalry was sometimes used to protect an army's flanks or pursue fleeing enemy troops, but the mountainous terrain in Greece was not suitable for chariots when the city-states fought each other.



A Corinthian helmet from the city-state of Corinth. Each region had a helmet of a different shape.

When soldiers were needed for battle, ordinary citizens made up the armies, which were led by aristocrats from wealthy families. Poor farmers or craftsmen used slings or bows while men who could afford armor became hoplites. Though the custom changed in later years, battles were usually fought in the summer months, the "fighting season," and during the 2nd Peloponnesian War fighting became more savage, with the whole populations of cities being slain or forced into slavery. Between the ages of 18 and 20, citizens became "ephebes" and could be made to do military service for their city-state. Slaves weren't citizens but often served as additional troops called "skirmishers," who protected the flanks of the phalanx with slings for hurling stones or with bows and arrows.



Red-figured vase painting of a warrior leaving his family to fight.

Activity box

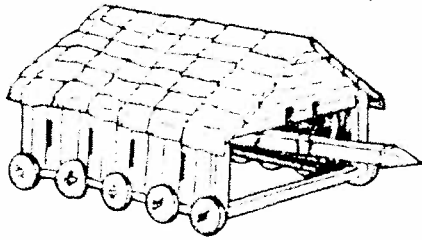
1. Why wasn't cavalry very effective in Greek battles?

2. What were Greek foot soldiers called?

3. People who may have to serve in the army or navy were called _____
4. What do you think the vase shield decoration is?

5. What thoughts would run through your head if you were facing a phalanx?

WEAPONS

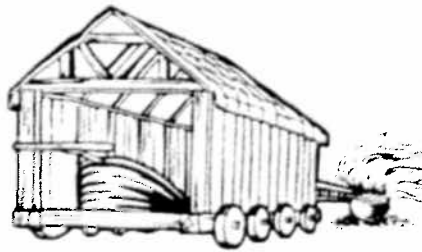
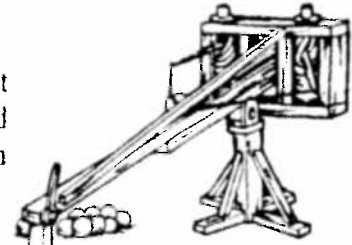


Battering Ram

Mobile battering rams on wheels were used against the walls or gates of enemy cities. The ram, often a tree trunk with a metal point, was suspended on ropes under a protective cover and swung to and fro by a team of men.

Flame thrower

This Hellenistic flame thrower from the fourth century B.C. was used against wooden walls or gates. Huge bellows were worked by a team of men. They forced air through a hollow log and the increased oxygen caused the flames from burning coals in a metal cauldron to flare up and burn the target.

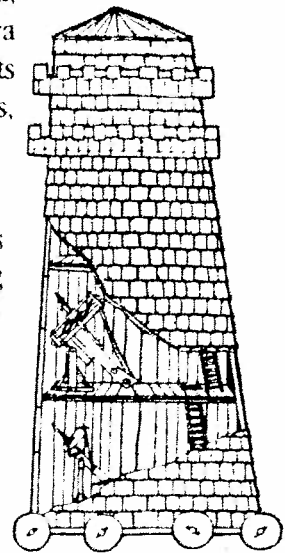


The Catapult

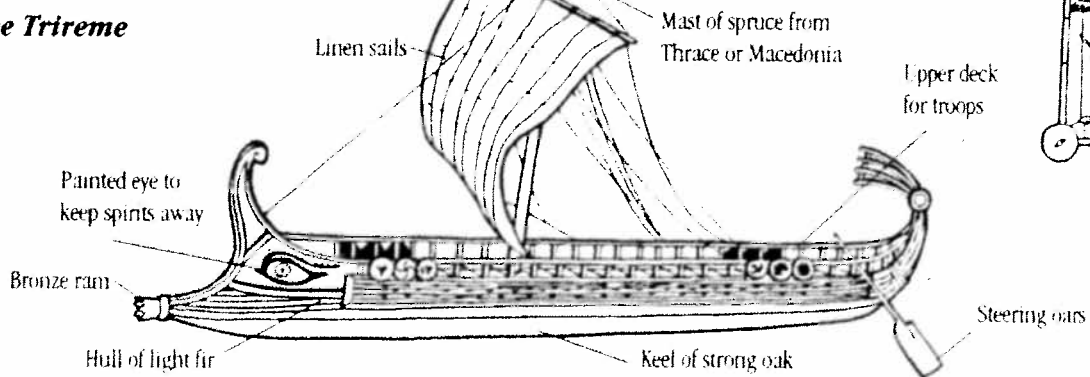
The Greeks invented the catapult around 400 B.C. and, about 50 years later, the torsion catapult, where extra power came from tightly twisted ropes. Early catapults were similar to a crossbow and fired arrows or javelins, not rocks like later versions.

Siege Tower

Siege towers enabled soldiers to scale the walls of besieged cities. Inside were different levels where archers firing arrows or catapults hurling rocks could break the resistance of a defending army. If the besieging army couldn't force a surrender, the siege could last months until starvation made the city's citizens give in.



The Trireme



Activity Box

Use the given words to complete the passage about the trireme.

cripple **sail** **warship** **shore** **break** **enemy** **unable** **invented**
archers **sea** **lowered** **ships** **battle** **metal** **oarsmen**

In the sixth century B.C. the Greeks _____¹ the trireme, a fast _____² using about 170 _____³ for power. It carried hoplites and _____⁴ who fired arrows at the _____⁵. The prow of the ship had a _____⁶ spike under the waterline to _____⁷ or sink enemy _____⁸, or to _____⁹ their oars so they were _____¹⁰ to maneuver. The trireme carried a _____¹¹ for use in the open _____¹² but this was _____¹³ or left on the _____¹⁴ before a _____¹⁵ commenced.