

Polearms - Advanced Weapons Training

A Collaboration of the Men and Women of the Brotherhood of Saint Karl

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A manual for those in the Brotherhood who have decided to become Man-at-Arms for the long weapons called Polearms, which can be brutal and deadly against footmen, and even the cavalry... if utilized correctly.

Introduction

Polearms, whilst being long-shafted, two handed weapons, can serve as good and effective blades to fight in both duel scenarios, and battle formation situations, especially in the front lines and against cavalry.

The length of these weapons offer their wielder extra reach against their opponent. *However*, despite their length, Polearms have shown to be rather swift to handle, and in one-on-one combat, understanding your weapon and creating a strategy is *key*.



Polearms

The posture:

Polearms are weapons that use to vary in both weight and length, not to mention their different shapes as well. However, something that unites them is the way they all require two handed use. Normally, the hafts of the Polearms, *excluding the metal head*, can range from 1.2m - 2m (4–6.5 ft) tall, usually recommended to be as high as the wielder's own height. However, in rare cases the height of the shaft can reach 2.4m (8ft).

The weight on the other hand varies on both the length of the shaft, as well as the top blade. Normally it can be anything from 1.8kg (4lbs) - 4kg (8.8lbs). *Halberds*, for example, being longer in posture would weigh around 4kg, the same can go for *Billhooks*. Whilst a short, *though heavy*, *Polehammer* can weigh just at 1.8k.

Composition of a Polearm:

The different ways this weapon can be handled are what make it an ideal tool against your enemy. The *Poleaxe* for example, features at least *three* damage-dealers, the first being its *spearhead* (or *spike*), which is used for thrashing, the *hammerhead*, which is used to deal blunt damage, and the *axehead*, which is used for slashing and your opponent (and alternatively can be used as a hook). Some polearms, like the *Billhook*, also have a dedicated hook side. These are the three main pieces of the Poleaxe a beginner can notice.

Extra Part - The Shaft:

However, he who truly knows how to handle these weapons can also see another utilizable tool, the *shaft*, which not only serves to hold the Polearm, but can also be used to deal damage, especially when up-close, or if the situation allows you to do so.



Polearm Types



The Poleaxe



The Billhook



The Halberd



The Polehammer



The Glaive



The Partisan

Polearm Handling

Agility Length:

Though long, Polearms can be rather swift to handle and to move around, this happening due to the metallic, and heavier, part of it being located at the end of the shaft, whilst the hands of the wielder will most likely be towards the middle and end of the shaft.

Wide Two-Handed Grip:

Differently from a similarly long Broadsword, Polearms differ in the way they are held, which *highly* impacts the way they are utilized. Since the shaft makes up most of the weapon's posture, the wielder may place their hands however and wherever they wish. Having a wider gap between your hands means *both easier, and more control over your weapon*, since you can only move one hand to shift the weapon as you wish, while the other keeps balance and adds strength to it.

The Impact of Weight:

Though easy to move around short distances, the Polearm still remains a rather heavy weapon, especially if held in places like the very end of the shaft, and with no gap between the two hands. (In this particular example, it happens because the entire weight is falling on the other end)

Thus, it gives the wielder a great advantage to know how to utilize their Polearm as efficiently as possible, while using as little movement or energy to move it around. This will save you both energy and allow you to handle the weapon faster, whilst its strength will remain due to its weight.



Stances

The Roof (High Stance):

The wielder holds the Polearm so that the blade is facing upwards, one hand gripping at the middle, and the other near the end of the shaft.

- *It will be hard for the enemy to calculate the weapon's reach if it comes down, thus making them more hesitant.*
- *You can strike directly down as soon as the opponent approaches, and due to the weapon moving down, it will require less energy and move down quickly.*



The High Thrust (High to Middle Stance):

The end of the shaft is held just slightly above the head, and the blade can either face slightly downwards or directly parallel to the ground. The hands gripping at the end and middle of the shaft as usual.

- *Targets the opponent's head and upper-body, keeping them at bay as you slash towards them.*
- *Can easily take a shielding position with the shaft by lowering the weapon.*
- *Can easily turn into an Plow position and target the opponent's lower body*
- *Can turn the position into a slash if there is enough space between your hands*



The Ox (Middle Stance):

The Polearm is held parallel with the ground, standing just by the waist and held with one hand at the end of the shaft and the other at the middle. The blade will be facing the opponent. Knees need to be bent slightly for the base to be sturdier

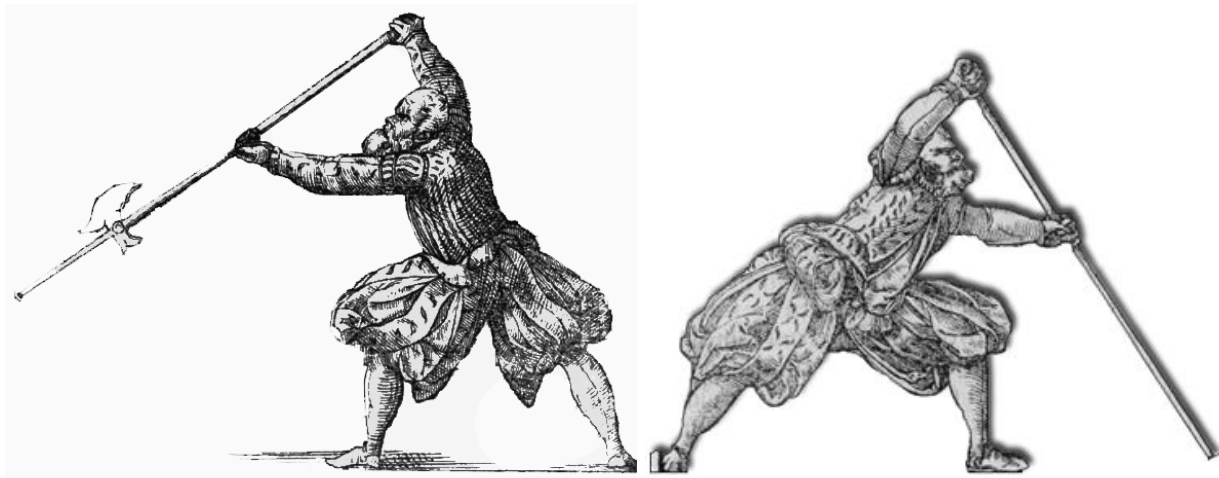
- *Good position to hit the enemy at different points, covering almost all of the upper-body as well as the waist.*
- *You can stab at different points quickly, while still keeping the enemy at reach.*
- *Can take a defensive position rather quickly (even more quickly than the Thruster stance), and can widen the grip between the hands for a stronger base*



The Plow (Low Stance):

Just like its name, this position is taken almost as if you are ploughing a field. The end of the shaft remains above the head, and the blade lower down, aiming towards the opponent's feet, and perhaps waist.

- *Much easier to shift into a defense position, though the blade will be facing down.*
- *If the enemy closes in, the weapon can be twisted so that you attack with the shaft, but to do this, the hand at the end of the shaft should not be holding at the very end of it, instead, leave some room to attack with the shaft.*



Side Plow (Middle-Low Stance):

Similarly to the Plow stance, the Polearm in this stance faces diagonally down, however, it is not kept above the head, instead it is positioned to go diagonally towards the torso, and the angle at which it is kept is not as steep.

- *Allows for more mobility, and bent knees to keep a strong posture are not necessary/ as important*
- *Allows for a longer reach than the Plow, due to the angle not being as steep*
- *Much like the plow, can allow for a quick defensive position to be taken by shifting the shaft to meet the opponent's attack.*
- *The Polearm can be twisted for an attack with the butt of the shaft, however, differently from the Plow motion, this will be directed towards the torso rather than the opponent's face.*
- *Together with the Standard Plow, this position can also be utilized to make your enemy fall. Due to the blade being low, if you manage to move it behind the enemy's leg, all you have to do will be to retract it back with one of the extended sides grabbing the opponent's leg to make them fall, or at the very last lose some balance and hurt their legs.*



Utilization of Polearms in Battles and Formations

Deployment

Polearms are best when either;

A - They are deployed as front liners in engagements when the enemy has Cavalry or other Bestial forces, with additional swordsmen behind them to provide support in combat.

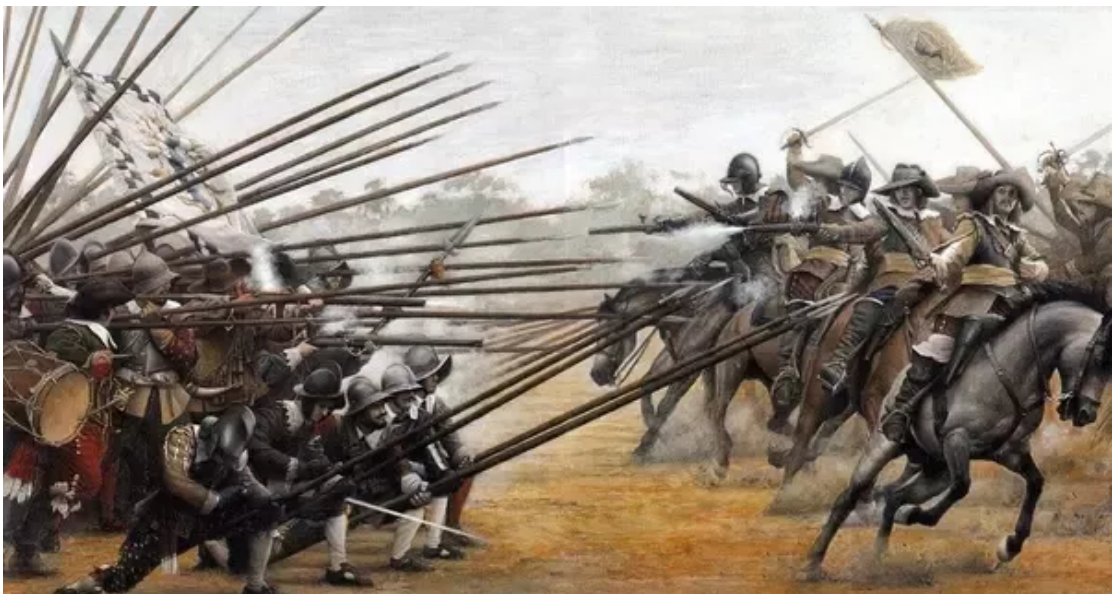
B - They are instead deployed behind standard swordsmen and assume a tight formation, utilizing the swordsmen shield as cover, from which they can attack the foe using their superior range.

Formations

With polearms comes a variety of formations that can effectively utilize their superior range, one of these formations is the **phalanx**.

A phalanx formation presents a compact and deadly wall of pike, halberd and spear (or other polearms) which is one of the most effective ways of deterring an enemy cavalry charge.

The formation comprises several ranks of polearms, the first rank is to kneel and present their weapon forwards towards the opponent, their weapons raised upwards at a slight angle. The second rank is to stand behind the first and present their weapons in a straightforward manner, after the charge would be stopped by the first rank, the second should then attempt to engage the enemy using superior range, should they be close enough to do so. Following ranks are to present their weapons higher and higher, forming an incremental-like line.



OOO References:

Here are some videos on Polearm usage, watching these will help you understand the IRL nature of the weapons a bit more, as well as give you some tactics and ideas that I might not have mentioned.

Always remember: CRP is about being creative, witty, and having fun at the same time, so use these videos to also help you visualize your character fighting, which I believe will make the entire process much more immersive and epic

[Medieval Poleaxe Combat Demonstration](#)

[Polearm 101 with Fezzik](#)

[Experimental Sparring: 1v2 - Polearm vs. Swords](#)

[Halberd in 3 Minutes - Showcasing HEMA](#)

[Halberd in 3 minutes PART 2 - Showcasing HEMA](#)

[longsword vs halberd](#)

[How to use a poleaxe](#)