



## Close Helmet for Heavy and Medium Cavalry Use, decorated with etched bands and borders

### Date

about 1550

### Primary Maker

Southern German

### Medium

etched steel with traces of leather

### Description

Formed of a skull with a peak and bevor attached to it by common pivots, an associated and probably restored falling buffe of two lames attached to the bevor by rivets, a modern plume-holder, and three associated gorget-plates front and rear. The skull, peak, and bevor are sufficiently congruent to suggest that they originally belong together. The rounded SKULL rises to a high medial comb embossed along its crest with a series of notches showing minor perforations to the rear of its apex. The skull is cut away at the front to form a face-opening with a straight, horizontal upper edge and strongly concave sides. The upper edge is bordered internally by a later leather lining-band secured by eight externally-flush rivets of which that at the far left has pulled out. The rear of the

skull is flanged outwards at its lower edge to receive the rear gorget-plates. Running internally around the rear of the neck, just above the angle of the flange, is a later leather lining-band formerly secured by eight rivets of which the fifth from the left is now missing. All the rivets are round-headed with circular internal washers except for that at the far left which is externally flush to permit the overlap of the bevor. Attached at the nape of the skull by a pair of round-headed rivets fitted, in the case of the left one, with a circular internal washer, is a large, modern PLUME-HOLDER formed of a tapering tube with an outward-turned and roped upper edge, and laterally-projecting, lobated arms. Pierced to either side of the plume-holder are a pair of horizontally-aligned holes that served to lace the ends of the internal cross straps that would originally have issued diagonally from each side of the brow of the skull. To the outside of each of these pairs of holes are three vertically-aligned holes probably serving for ventilation and hearing. Attached within the lower end of the right side of the face opening by an externally-flush rivet is a modern, downward-projecting spring-strip that expands to its distal end where it is fitted with a rectangular stud and a mushroom-shaped stud that protrude through the skull and respectively serve as a catch to engage the bevor, and a push-button to release the catch. Pierced at each side of the skull are holes to receive the pivots that retain the peak and bevor. The PIVOTS have domed octofoil heads. The ends of their shanks are drilled and tapped to receive the internal round-headed screws and washers that now serve to retain them. It is probable that the ends of the shanks were original riveted over but subsequently cut off when the helmet was taken apart for cleaning. The PEAK has short arms with rounded terminals. Its upper edge, which is closely shaped to the front of the skull, rises to a low central cusp. Its lower edge is flanged forward to form the peak proper which curves outwards and then inwards at each side to an obtuse central point. The free edge of the peak is decorated with a notched inward turn. The BEVOR is strongly shaped to the chin where it is medially ridged. It is cut at the front with a deep, U-shaped face-opening. The edge of the face-opening is bordered internally by a later leather lining-band secured by nine externally-flush rivets punched with dots at their outer ends. A later wiring-hole is pierced just above and to the front of the last of the rivets at the left side. A large hole is pierced in the corresponding position at the right side of the face opening. The function of this and two smaller holes behind it is uncertain. It is likely that they once again represent later wiring-holes. The lower edge of the bevor is flanged outwards to receive the front gorget-plates. Running internally around the front of the neck, just above the angle of the flange, is a later leather lining-band secured by seven round-headed rivets with circular internal washers. The band at one time extended to the left of the neck where it was secured by an eighth rivet of externally flush form. The rivet is an incorrect modern addition, occupying a formerly vacant construction-hole that aligns with the hole for the last of the lining-rivets at the left of the neck of the skull. The corresponding construction-hole at the right side of the bevor has been opened out to a rectangular form to accommodate the rectangular spring-catch that projects from the right of the neck of the skull. Attached within the right side of the chin of the bevor by a pair of externally-

flush rivets at its rear end, is a forward-projecting spring-strip that is fitted at its distal end with a rectangular stud that protrudes through the bevor to support the falling buffe. The prow-shaped FALLING BUFFE is formed of two downward-overlapping lames that are connected to one another and to the bevor at each side by round-headed rivets with circular internal washers. The chevron-shaped upper edge of the first lame is decorated with a boldly roped inward turn accompanied by a deeply recessed border that widens to its center. The lower edge of the border is pierced at each side with a broad secondary vision-slit (the primary vision-slit being formed by the gap between the peak and the upper edge of the falling-buffe). The upper edge of the second lame has a rounded, chevron-shaped upper edge. The lower edges of both lames are gently concave with projecting lobes around the articulating rivets at their outer ends. Attached within the right side of the upper edge of the second lame by a pair of externally flush rivets at its rear end, is a forward-projecting modern spring-strip that is fitted at its distal end with a rectangular stud that protrudes through the second lame to support the lower edge of the first lame. The right side of the first and second lames are respectively pierced with two groups and one group of circular ventilation holes, each group formed of a circle of twelve holes surrounding a single central hole. The execution of the etching is coarse in comparison to the rest of the helmet, as is the overall line of the edges, suggesting modern work. The helmet is fitted with three upward-overlapping GORGET-PLATES front and rear. The lowest plate is in each case deeper than the rest and ascends at its lower edge to an obtuse central point, more pronounced at the front than at the rear. The lowest two lames at the front are medially ridged. The plates are connected to one another and to the flanged lower edges of the skull and bevor respectively by round-headed sliding-rivets with circular internal washers at their outer ends and by internal leathers at their centers. The front leather is secured to the flange of the bevor and to each of the front gorget plates by a pair of rivets. The rear leather is attached to the flange of the skull and to the first and second rear gorget plates by a single rivet in each case, but to the lowest rear gorget plate by a pair of rivets. All of the rivets are externally flush except for those in the lowest lames at both the front and rear, which are in each case round-headed with circular internal washers. The lower lames are in each case bordered internally at their lower edges by later leather lining-bands. Each band is now retained by thirteen rivets of which those to either side of the central one are also the pair that secure the lower end of the overlying connecting leather. All of the rivets are round-headed with circular internal washers, except for the outermost ones of the rear leather which are externally flush and now pulled out. The left outermost rivet of the front leather has lost its internal washer. Located just behind each of the outermost lining-rivets of the lowest front gorget-plate is a vacant construction-hole that aligns with the outermost lining-rivet of the lowest rear gorget-plate. Vacant rivet-holes are located just to the inside of each of the sliding-rivets of the front gorget plate, and just to the outside of those of the rear gorget plates. It seems likely that these holes, in conjunction with those now occupied by the sliding-rivets, at one time served to attach internal connecting-leathers. Additional rivet-holes, serving no identifiable function in the present configuration of the plates, are pierced in the flange of the bevor just to the inside of the left sliding-rivet that connects the first front gorget-plate to it, in the second front gorget-plate just to the outside of the left sliding-rivet that connects the third front gorget-plate to it, and in the first rear gorget-plate just beneath the left sliding rivet that connects the second rear gorget-plate to it. The comb and main borders of the helmet are decorated with finely etched bands of running and scrolling acanthus foliage involving flowers, monster-heads, cornucopia, trophies of arms and, at the center of the brow, a winged cherub's head, all on a plain blackened ground. Each band is bordered to the inside by a blackened line. The etched decoration at the upper edge of the falling buffe, differing in character from that found on the rest of the helmet, consists of running foliage and flowers on a stippled and blackened ground. Below the border, running through the breaths of the upper lame, can be seen traces of an etched or incised line. Traces of the same kind of erased line can be found on HAM 2588.e-h, suggesting that they may have been associated with one another before their incorporation in the composite armor HAM 2588. The helmet is bright with an overall light patina showing a few pits and dents here and there. The metal shows evidence of delamination at some points. The etching exhibits a certain amount of wear, especially around the front of the neck. The falling buffe is clearly associated with the rest of the helmet. Not only is it differently decorated from the rest of the helmet, but its upper edge is roped rather than notched. In addition, it implausibly projects forward beyond the peak of the helmet and sits on the bevor in such a way as to expose part of the border of the face-opening of the latter. In fact the workmanship of the falling-buffe suggests that it is of modern manufacture. If so, it was presumably made to fit another helmet since it fits the present helmet poorly. There are indications that the gorget-plates might also be associated and reworked to fit and match the present helmet. The articulating rivets are badly aligned in places, as are the adjacent holes for the possible attachment of former internal leathers. Other holes adjacent to the rivets cannot be explained in the present context. The outer ends of the lowest front gorget-plate project slightly beyond those of the two plates above it. The lower corners of the first and second gorget-plates at both the front and back show different degrees of cropping. The upper edges of the gorget-plates, particularly at their outer ends, do not show the trueness of line expected of the helmet of this quality. The etching of the gorget-plates shows a slightly heavier-handed treatment than that seen elsewhere in the helmet. Viewed collectively, these features strongly suggest that the gorget-plates have been reworked to fit the present helmet.

### Dimensions

31.8 × 20.3 × 33 cm (12 1/2 × 8 × 13 in.), 7 lb 2 oz (weight)