

[LAI130875 Strib Features: The First Emperor's Army EDIT]

China's Terracotta Warriors: The First Emperor's Legacy

StarTribune NIE #4

The First Emperor's Army

The First Emperor's Army was so well trained and skillful that it was able to defeat every opposing army it faced. The armor and weapons used by the Qin army resulted from centuries of experimentation. China's earliest known military forces date back to the Shang period about one thousand years earlier, when bronze first appeared in China.

The Terracotta Army shows us today why Qin's army was invincible. In pits that lie three-quarters of a mile from the mausoleum prepared for the First Emperor himself, the clay warriors stand in battle formation. Pit 1, the first to be excavated, holds more than 6,000 terracotta warriors, most wearing armor. They face the emperor's grave in order to guard it. Other soldiers face outward to protect against attack. Just imagine what an impression they must have made fully painted in bright colors.

Each actual suit of armor (called a cuirass) was worn over a thick robe. The plates (called lamellae) composing the armor were probably made of lacquered leather. The smooth surfaces of these light plates allowed arrows and other projectiles to simply glance off. The construction of the armor, with all the plates overlapped on all sides and attached with leather or silk cords, enabled easy body movement. The soldiers could even bend at the waist! Most of the soldiers wearing this armor would have held weapons with handles, such as spears.

Behind the army in Pit 1 must have been wooden chariots that did not survive over time. Charioteer figures are easily identified because they extend both arms to hold the horses' reins. Pit 2 once included 89 chariots with 356 horses, 116 cavalry horses, and more than 900 warriors. The much smaller Pit 3, which represents the headquarters of the army, contained 65 warriors and one chariot with a crew of four.

Use the News Activity!

The contents of Qin Shihuang's tomb—including the warriors, weapons, and chariots, as well as the incredible details of the warrior's dress—provide a wealth of information about warfare and technology during the Qin period. Today, many of us rely on the newspaper for the

latest news on war technology and strategies. Search the StarTribune for stories about wars around the world. What do these stories tell you about war technology and practices in different parts of the world? How does access to technology, weapons, and financial resources impact the nature of each of the wars you read about?



China, Qin dynasty (221–206 BCE), *Terracotta Warriors*, View of Pit 1 showing the terracotta army lined up at attention facing East. The images are produced with kind permission from the Qin Shihuang's Terracotta Warriors and Horses Museum, ©Photograph by Xia Juxian and Guo Yan.



China, Qin dynasty (221–206 BCE), *Light Infantryman*, terracotta, excavated from Pit 1, Qin Shihuang tomb complex, 1980. The images are produced with kind permission from the Qin Shihuang's Terracotta Warriors and Horses Museum, ©Photograph by Xia Juxian and Guo Yan.