

Press Release



The Lord of the Rings: Weapons and Warfare

by Chris Smith

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New book showcases battles, arms, and armor in film trilogy

About the Book

Six weeks before the December 17 release of *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*, the final film in New Line Cinema's celebrated trilogy, Houghton Mifflin is publishing *The Lord of the Rings: Weapons and Warfare*, which reconstructs the history and events surrounding the epic battles in the three films. The book, combining an impressive amount of technical detail about props created for the film and historical information drawn from J.R.R. Tolkien's fictional mythology, features an exclusive foreword by Christopher Lee, who plays Saruman, and an introduction by Academy Award winner Richard Taylor, the head of WETA Workshop. *Weapons and Warfare* is unquestionably the most compelling and content-rich companion to the movie trilogy published to date.

Lavishly illustrated with one thousand photos, paintings, maps, sculptures, and sketches, most appearing here for the first time, *Weapons and Warfare* is an indispensable chronicle of *The Lord of the Rings* creatures, warriors, armies, and battlegrounds. Author Chris Smith treats the filmmakers' notes, designs, and props as a true archive, and the resulting book feels almost like an archaeologist's report.

The wealth of information will satisfy even the hungriest of fans, especially those intimately familiar with the landmark books by J.R.R. Tolkien upon which Peter Jackson's movie trilogy is based. *Weapons and Warfare* offers a wonderful bridge between the modern films and Tolkien's classic literature.

In great depth, Smith explains each culture's approach to combat — how the warriors fought, why they were fighting, what armor they wore, and what weapons they used against their enemies. He analyzes the styles and tactics of Númenóreans, Dwarves, Elves, Hobbits,

Wizards, the men of Rohan and Gondor, Orcs, and Easterlings, among others. Readers will learn that

- every item crafted by the Elves, from armor to swords, reflected designs found in nature. Autumnal themes (leaf patterns) and hues (copper, brown, and rich golds) prevailed.
- because armor and weapons were not manufactured in an organized fashion in Mordor, the Orcs' armor was apparently a manifestation of each individual's personality. The only consistency appears to have been the need to cover as much of the body as possible to block out the hated sun.
- the Orcs of Mordor favored weapons that could be carried in the hand — particularly swords and axes that could be thrust at or brought down upon their foes — rather than weapons that had to be thrown. The Orcs failed to recognize the strategic advantage of range.
- Minas Tirith, the massive fortress stronghold of Gondor built around the outthrust shoulder of the easternmost peak of the White Mountains, had seven walled levels reaching a thousand feet into the air to the Citadel of the King and the Tower of Ecthelion. Each level had only one gate, and each gate was situated in a different part of the wall, thus making the city almost unassailable by attackers.

Every major conflict depicted in the film trilogy is described in detail, and many descriptions are accompanied by a specially commissioned battle diagram from the films' chief designers. Battle plans are shown for the Last Alliance of Elves and Men, Helm's Deep, and the climactic Battle of Pelennor Fields, among others. The book's noteworthy features include a chart showing the comparative ranges of different weapons, and a glossary of terms that clearly and comprehensively explains the vocabulary of the book.

The Lord of the Rings: Weapons and Warfare is an essential guide to the conflicts and cultures of Middle-earth, a monumental book sure to please the millions of movie fans and Tolkien readers who have made *The Lord of the Rings* the most beloved adventure story ever told.

About the Author

Chris Smith was born ten years after *The Lord of the Rings* was first published. He read the book in the year *The Silmarillion* was released, and he sold thousands of copies of J.R.R. Tolkien's works during his many years in bookselling. Smith was appointed Tolkien editor in the year that preproduction began on Peter Jackson's award-winning movie trilogy.

His research for *The Lord of the Rings: Weapons and Warfare* took him to the United States and New Zealand, the country that "became" Middle-earth on screen. There he interviewed key creative personnel for all the movies', including Alan Lee, John Howe, Richard Taylor, Christian Rivers, the WETA team of artists and weaponsmiths, and, most important, Peter Jackson himself. Tolkien's vision provided the bricks of this book; the others' insights and skill provided the mortar.

The Lord of the Rings: Weapons and Warfare (ISBN 0-00717201-X) is an illustrated and narrated guide to the battles and race-lore of Peter Jackson's Lord of the Rings film-trilogy. It was written by Chris Smith in 2003, produced by Arjen Jansen, and published by Harper Collins Publishers (London). Following a foreword by Christopher Lee and an insightful introduction by Weta members Richard Taylor and Daniel Falconer, Weapons and Warfare features 214 detailed pages concerning each skirmish, piece of Being a huge Lord of the Rings nerd, having written my senior college Capstone on the linguistic merits of Quenya and Sindarin Elvish, I think I'm pretty qualified to rate this book in accuracy. All in all, it made detailed reference to the Silmarillion lineages of Gil-Galad and Elendil of the Numenorean line really well. It mentioned the sundering of many nations existing only in the Silmarillion and known only to the avid LotR "scholar". This is the movie visual companion that looks specifically at the weapons and history of warfare in The Lord of the Rings. There are lots of photos of the weapons and armor featured in the movie, with occasional concept sketches. The writeup is incredibly detailed.