

The Start of the Roman Army

Roman soldiers were grouped into larger numbers called legions. There were about 30 of these at different times.

Legions were divided into 10 cohorts of 480 men.

Cohorts were divided into 6 centuries of about 80 men led by a centurion.

Centuries were divided into 10 groups of 8 men who shared a tent or barrack room.



How Did You Become a Legionary?

The legions were made up of recommended Roman citizens.

Recruits had to be 25 and in the army for at least 20 years.

Legionaries were not allowed to be married whilst they were in the army.



What If You Were Not a Roman Citizen?



Soldiers could join as an auxiliary. Auxiliaries often had special skills such as horse riding and archery. The auxiliary soldiers would receive citizenship when they retired.

Legionary's Training



Learn to build camps, swim, sling stones, ride horses, mount and dismount horses fully armed with his shield and no stirrups.



Do a drill once a day, twice if he was a recruit.



March 30km, three times a month, wearing his armour which weighed 20kg.



Learn how to use a sword, spear and fight mock battles with weapons which had covered tips for safety.

Legionary's Training



The Turtle was used to advance towards the enemy by creating a shell out of shields around a group of soldiers.



The Wedge was used to divide the enemy by the legion creating a 'V'.



The Repel Cavalry was used to protect against soldiers on horses. Soldiers used their shield as protection and threw spears.



The Orb was used when the army had been split. The legionaries would protect the archers and officers.

Punishments and Rewards

Discipline was very harsh. Soldiers were beaten if they did not follow orders.

Deserters and soldiers who left their post or fell asleep whilst on look-out were beaten to death by their fellow soldiers.

On a more positive note, there were awards for bravery for different ranks, such as medals, arm and neck bands. Gold crowns and silver spears were given to officers.

