

The background features a faded, light-colored illustration of the Roman Eagle (Aquila). The eagle is shown with its wings spread, perched on a globe. Below the eagle is a banner with the Latin inscription "S.P.Q.R." (Senatus Populusque Romanus). The entire scene is set against a light, textured background.

ROMAN ARMY

What other soldiers did the Romans have?

- Legionaries were the best Roman soldiers, and the best paid. There were other soldiers though. An auxiliary was a soldier who was not a Roman citizen. He was paid a third as much as a legionary. Auxiliaries guarded forts and frontiers, but also fought in battles, often in the front lines, where it was the most dangerous.
- Some soldiers had special skills. They shot bows and arrows, flung stones from slingshots, or could swim rivers to surprise an enemy - like modern commandos.
- Artillery soldiers fired giant catapults, called onagers in Latin, machines that fired rocks or balls of burning tar. The Romans used big wind-up crossbows, called ballistas in Latin, too.
- Usually, Romans liked to fight on foot. They used cavalry (soldiers riding horses) to chase a fleeing enemy. In a battle, the cavalry often lined up either side of the infantry (foot-soldiers).

What armour and weapons did the Romans have?

- We know about Roman armour and weapons from Roman pictures and statues, and from finds by modern archaeologists.
- A Roman soldier wore armour made from strips of iron and leather (lorica segmentata in Latin). On his head was a metal helmet (galea). He carried a rectangular shield (scutum), curved so it protected his body. The shield was made of wood and leather.
- The soldier's main weapons were a short sword for stabbing (gladius) and a long spear, or javelin (pilum) for throwing. The javelin had a sharp iron point, and a thin, bendy shaft. When it hit an enemy's shield, the point stuck in, but the shaft bent. This made it difficult to pull out. The long spear shaft got in the way, so the enemy soldier had to throw away his shield.

Roman legionary

Javelin - 2 metres long and made out of wood with a metal tip

Sword - About 5cm wide and 50cm long

Tunic - Was made of wool that would keep soldiers warm

Sandals - Made of leather they would withstand hours of marching



Helmet - Protects the head without blocking the view

Metal Jacket - metal strips tied together with leather.

Belt - Sword and dagger were attached to the belt

Shield - Made of wood this was used for protection

How well-trained were Roman soldiers?

- Roman soldiers kept fit by running, marching and practice-fighting. They could march 20 miles (30 km) a day wearing armour. They could swim or cross rivers in boats, build bridges, and smash their way into forts. Each man carried his weapons and shield, some food and camping equipment (such as spare clothes, cooking pot and an axe or spade).
- Roman soldiers almost always obeyed orders. They usually fought in lines, marching forward with their shields facing the enemy. If they were being fired at from above (with arrows or rocks), the men would lift their shields over their heads for protection. They looked like a tortoise, so they called this formation the testudo (Latin for tortoise).

Who was in the Roman army?

- Only men could be in the Roman Army. No women. Every Roman soldier was a Roman citizen. He had to be at least 20 years old. He was not supposed to get married while he was a soldier. Most soldiers in the Roman Empire came from countries outside Italy. There were Roman soldiers from Africa, France, Germany, the Balkans, Spain and the Middle East.
- Soldiers had to stay in the army for at least 25 years! Then they could retire, with a pension or a gift of land to farm. Old soldiers often settled down to old age together, in a military town or colonia.

What was a legion?

- There were about 30 legions in the Roman army. Each legion had between 4,000 and 6,000 soldiers, called legionaries. Each legion had ten cohorts. Each cohort was made up of six troops of about 80 legionaries, called centuries. Each century was led by a centurion. A centurion carried a short rod, to show his importance. He could also use his stick to beat any soldier who disobeyed an order. The officer commanding the whole legion was called a legate.