



The Roman Soldier

The Life of a Soldier

The Roman Empire is so big mostly because of the skills and strength of the soldiers. Men stay in the army full time.

The Roman army is well organized. Each main section of the army is called a legion.



The life of a Roman soldier is very difficult. The men are disciplined by flogging. The general can even have a soldier beheaded for not following orders. Deserters get their right hands cut off.

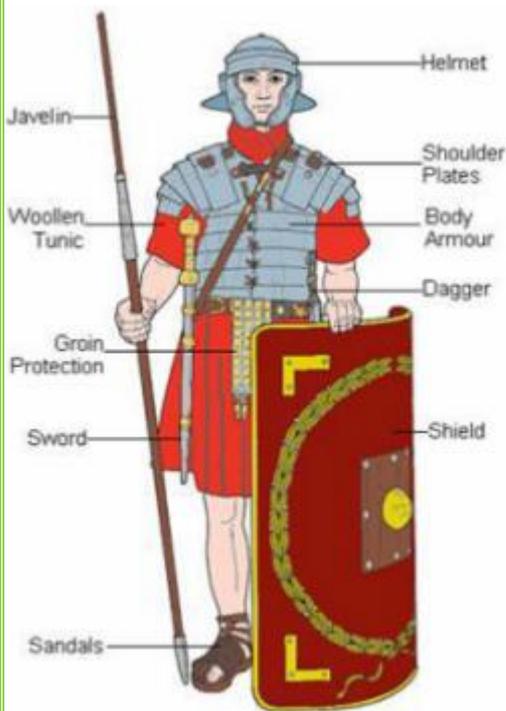
While travelling, the diet of a soldier consists mostly of bread. The soldiers also eat porridge and what vegetables they can find. They get a little wine. Meat is so rare that many of the soldiers don't like to eat it.

At times soldiers are paid, but often they are given no money except for their share of the booty.

Soldiers have to carry a huge amount of gear. Marching with so much to carry is hard on the men. After a long day's march the men must make camp.



The Uniform



The Roman soldier dresses in a helmet, mail breastplate, leg and arm guards, belt, tunic, and boots. The Roman helmet is made of iron, bronze, or brass. The helmet is bowl-shaped with a neck guard. The inside is lined with leather to protect the soldier's head. The helmet also had cheek guards to protect the face. Many helmets have fittings for crests.

The mail breastplate of the Roman soldier is made from iron. The shoulders are reinforced. Rings run horizontally around the body. Leg and arm guards are used. These mainly consist of iron plates sew to leather.

The soldier's tunic is made from linen or wool. The tunic is worn above the knee. Only soldiers and slaves are allowed to show their knees. Around the waist the soldier wear a belt. The belt's main purpose is

for holding the daggers and swords. Sometimes two belts are worn, one for the sword and one for the dagger. The boot looks more like a sandal.

Weapons

The Roman soldier carried shields, swords, daggers, spears, and javelins. The Roman shield is curved and usually oval or rectangular. The soldiers learn to lock their shields together to make a formation called a tortoise. This make a protective barrier against the enemies' arrows and stones.

The catapult is also used by the Roman army. Stones weighing as much as 66 pounds are flung into the air. They land up and can easily make holes in the walls of the enemy's fort.

