

THE ANCIENT ROMAN ARMY'S TACTICS, WEAPONS, FOOD



BY: MILES HILGER

THE ROMAN ARMY WAS THE MOST POWERFUL FORCE IN THE WORLD, IT CONQUERED A HUGE PART OF THE CIVILIZED WORLD, THEY DID THIS WITH THEIR DEFEAT PROOF WEAPONS AND TACTICS.

WEAPONS

THE GLADIUS WAS THE MOST USED ROMAN WEAPON IN THE INFANTRY, IT GOT ITS NICKNAME THE SHORT SWORD BECAUSE, ACCORDING TO THE REPORT; THE LONGEST SWORD DISCOVERED WAS 24 INCHES LONG! BUT HEY, IT WAS VERY EFFECTIVE! IT WAS USED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE ARMY, FROM

LEGIONARIES CENTURIONS TO EVEN GENERALS. AS YOU CAN SEE IT WAS VERY POWERFUL!!



GLADIUS

THE PUGGIO WAS THE ROMAN EQUIVALENT TO THE SWISS ARMY KNIFE, IT CAME IN ALL DIFFERENT SHAPES AND SIZES.

THE PILUM OR SPEAR WAS TYPICALLY USED BY THE 'HASTATI' AND THE 'PRINCIPIES'[HEAVILY ARMED FOOT UNITS THAT WERE IN THE FIRST 2 ROWS.] APPARENTLY CAESAR HIMSELF HAD SEEN THIS SPEAR GO THROUGH 2 GALLIC SHIELDS.

THE HASTA OR SPEAR HAD A SPECIALLY DESIGNED TIP. THE WOOD STAFF WAS 2 METERS LONG. THE SPEAR ITSELF WAS SIMILAR TO THE GREEK'S SPEAR. IT WAS USED DURING THE EARLY DAYS OF THE ROMAN ARMY. THE SPEAR WAS DOUBLE POINTED SO IF ONE TIP BROKE THERE WAS STILL ANOTHER TIP LEFT.

FAST FACTS: ROMANS WORE RED BATTLE CLOAKS THAT WAS MEANT TO SCARE THE ENEMY. BELIEVE IT OR NOT, THERE WAS ONE ROMAN GENERAL WHO WAS KNOWN TO PICK HIS NOSE OFTEN.

ROMAN TACTICS

IN BATTLE ROMANS WOULD STAND SIDE TO SIDE WITH EACH PERSON HOLDING THEIR SHIELD IN FRONT OF THE PERSON TO THEIR RIGHT. THE SOLDIERS WERE TOLD THAT RETREATING OR TAKING YOUR SHIELD AWAY FROM IN FRONT OF THE SOLDIER NEXT TO YOU WAS LIKE ABANDONING YOUR BROTHER.

SOLDIERS WOULD LINE UP IN A FORMATION THAT WAS NAMED CESAR'S TURTLE. IN THE FIRST ROW, THE SOLDIERS WOULD HOLD THEIR SHIELDS IN FRONT OF THEM. IN THE SECOND ROW, THEY WOULD HOLD THEM ABOVE THEIR HEADS, SO NO ARROWS COULD PENETRATE FROM ABOVE.

DURING A FIERCE BATTLE MANY SOLDIERS WOULD OF COURSE GET TIRED, SO COMMANDERS WOULD DECIDE THAT SOLDIERS IN THE FRONT ROW WOULD FIGHT FOR 15 MINUTES THEN RETURN TO THE BACK ROW. THIS WOULD PROCEED CONTINUOUSLY, AND EVENTUALLY IF NECESSARY THE SOLDIERS WOULD RETURN AGAIN TO THE FRONT ROW AND SO ON.

ONE OF THE FAVORITE TACTICS OF THE ROMAN ARMY WAS SURROUNDING OR SCALING SIEGED TOWNS WALLS, AND FORCING STARVATION UPON THE TOWN WHILE CONTINUOUSLY FIRING ARTILLERY OVER THE WALLS. IF THIS TOOK MORE THEN A MONTH, ALL THE SOLDIERS WOULD BE SENT IN TO SLAUGHTER THE PEOPLE INSTEAD.

FOOD

THE MOST IMPORTANT DIET FOR THE SOLDIERS WAS BREAD. EACH GOT RATIONED A PORTION OF GRAIN A DAY. THEY ALSO HAD MEAT AND EGGS, A SOLDIERS DIET WAS HOWEVER BASED ON WHERE HE WAS LOCATED AND MADE UP OF THE LOCAL GOODS.

FOR INSTANCE IN CORBRIDGE, SOME OF THE FOODS INCLUDED WILD ANIMALS (FOXES, BADGERS, BEAVERS AND MOLES), WHILE SOLDIERS AT BENWELL ATE MUSSELS. AT CARLISLE, WILD GEESE FROM SOLWAY WERE CAUGHT AND EATEN. THOUGH PROBABLY ENJOYED BY SOLDIERS AND OFFICERS, HUNTING WAS NOT RELIED UPON TO PROVIDE A LARGE AMOUNT OF MEAT AND LARGE GAME LIKE WILD BOAR WAS INFREQUENT.

LOCAL CELTIC BEER WAS ENJOYED BY OFFICERS AND SOLDIERS ALIKE AND DRANK IN LARGE QUANTITIES - VINDOLANDA HAD IT'S OWN BREWERS TO FILL THE DEMAND. WINE WAS A VERY IMPORTANT TO A SOLDIERS DIET. THE MILITARY HAD TWO DIFFERENT KINDS OF WINE, SOUR AND VINTAGE, BOTH OF THEM TASTED A LOT LIKE VINEGAR. THE ARMY DRANK THEIR WINE DILUTED WITH HOT OR COLD WATER.

HERE ARE SOME FAMOUS BATTLES:

53 BC - BATTLE OF CARRHAE - ROMAN TRIUMVIR CRASSUS IS DISASTROUSLY DEFEATED AND KILLED BY THE PARTHEANS, CRASSUS HAS MOLTEN GOLD Poured DOWN HIS THOUGHT BY HIS CAPTORS. THIS STARTS THE FIVE YEAR ROMAN PERSION WARS.

52 BC - BATTLE OF ALESIA - CAESAR DEFEATS THE GALLIC REBEL, VERCINGETORIX COMPLETING THE ROMAN CONQUEST OF GALLIA CORNATA.

47 BC - FEBRUARY - BATTLE OF THE NILE - CAESAR DEFEATS THE FORCES OF THE EGYPTIAN KING PTOLEMY XIII

149.BC BATTLE OF CARTHAGE ROMAN FORCES SIEGE CARTHAGE BY WATER.

