

## Reading - Unit 3 - Wednesday WEEK 13

### 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, Gaul, 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. This was very clever because it meant that Rome had loyal ex-soldiers all over the provinces who could be called on to defend their homes. Old

soldiers often settled down to old age together, in a military town or colonia.

There were about 30 legions in the Roman Army. Each legion had between 4000 and 6000 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 stick, 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.

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 (most dangerous).

Usually, Romans liked to fight on foot. They used cavalry, soldiers on horses, to chase a fleeing enemy. In a battle, the cavalry often lined up either side of the foot-soldiers, or infantry.

## Questions

1. Were all Roman soldiers from Italy?
2. Find another word for "soldiers on horses."
3. Which soldiers were paid the most money?
4. How many legionaries made up a legion?
5. Who was in charge of an entire legion?
6. What is the Latin word for a military town ?
7. How did a centurion display his importance ?
8. How much was an auxiliary paid?
9. How many cohorts were in a legion?
10. How many legions were there in the Roman army?

## Answers

1. Were all Roman soldiers from Italy? **No**
2. Find another word for "soldiers on horses." **Cavalry**
3. Which soldiers were paid the most money? **Legionaries**
4. How many legionaries made up a legion? **4000—6000**
5. Who was in charge of an entire legion? **Legate**
6. What is the Latin word for a military town? **Colonia**
7. How did a centurion display his importance? **He carried a stick**
8. How much was an auxiliary paid? **a third of a legionary's wage**
9. How many cohorts in a legion? **10**
10. How many legions were there in the Roman army? **30**