Roman Miltary Essay, Research Paper

Roman Military

The Roman army was one of the greatest forces of all times.

The Roman army ,at its finest point, was nearly inconquerable. This was

due to the discipline of the soldiers, the hard and effective training of

the soldiers, the speed at wich new tactics were learned, and to the

organization of the soldiers.

From early times right down to the 3rd century A.D, the Roman army

was based on its legions. A legion varied in strength from

four-thousand to six-thousand men, and was subdivided onto ten cohorts.

Its leader used the title of legatus. His staff officers were called

tribuni. Senior non-commissioned officers were called centurions, who

varied greatly in rank. The soldiers of the legion were picked men: They

were all Roman citizens and received a higher pay than the auxillary

troops ,that is, foreigners who serve with the Roman army.

A legion consisited of heavily armoured infantry foot soldiers.

The Roman infantry became a feared force, well disciplined and well

trained. Their weapons were two javelins each and a short thrusting

sword. Cavalry was supplied by the auxilaries ,second line troops, and

was organised mainly in units of 500 men.

When it was on campaigns the army was accompanied by a number of

specialists. One was the camp commandant, who was responsible for the

organisation of the camp. The Romans were very careful about their camps.

No Roman army halted for a single night without digging a trenches and

fortifying its camp. Each soldier took his share in establishing the camp

and striking the camp the next day. Another specialist was the quaestor,

whose duty was to look after all the money matter. then there

were the engineers and all kinds of craftsmen and artisans. They were

responsible for siege operations and for the rather primative

Roman “artillery”, which consisted of big catapults and complicated

machines a little like crossbows. These were mainly used for hurling big

rocks and stones at the walls of a defence place. The engineers also had

to build the moveable towers that were used in sieges. The Roman

soldiers went up inside these towers so that they could see over the

walls of a fortified place and shoot their stones and arrows into it.

The engineers also made the scaling ladders that were used for getting

over walls.

The Roman soldiers won their battles just as much from their

power as by their courage. They had to be strong and fit, for

in addition to his weapons each soldier had to carry provisions for two

weeks and tools for pitching camp.

When the soldiers went into line of battle to fight, the formation

was called acies. When they were marching in column it was called agmen.

If during a battle the legion were hard pressed the soldiers formed an

orbis, which was very like the square that the British army formed in the

18th and 19th centuries if it was in difficulties. The standard of a

legion was the aquila ,or eagle, made of silver or bronze and showing

the bird with outstretched wings. It was the greatest disgrace if the

eagle was captured.

In Conclusion, the Roman military was an advanced force for its

time. The Roman soldiers were also highly trained and disciplined. The

Romans also had very effective tactics. This is why at the prime of the

Roman Empire the military was nearly invincible.