



# Organization of Roman Legions

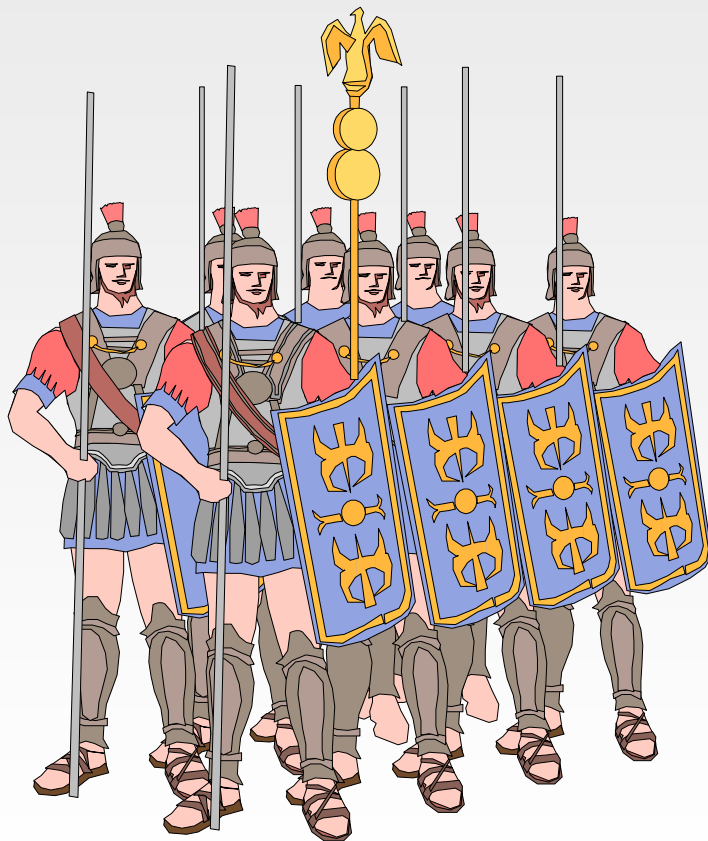


- **Roman legion** (from Latin *legio* "military levy", normally indicates the basic ancient Roman army unit recruited specifically from **Roman citizens**.
- Initially used fighting methods of Greeks (phalanx) but due to hilly terrain the Roman developed own methods in LEGIONS which were commanded by a **LEGATE**





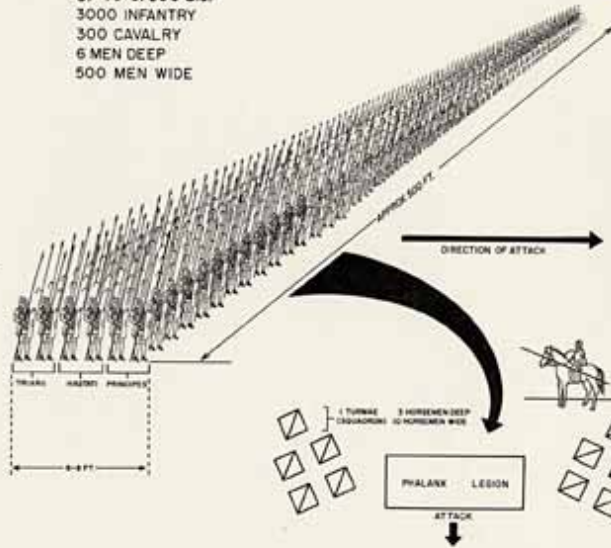
## How the Roman Army was organised



- The legion was made up of around **6000 men** who were divided into **ten cohorts**
- Each cohort was made up of **six centuries (of 80 men)**
- The centuries were commanded by a **centurion**

## Phalanx Legion

UP TO C. 300 B.C.  
3000 INFANTRY  
300 CAVALRY  
6 MEN DEEP  
500 MEN WIDE

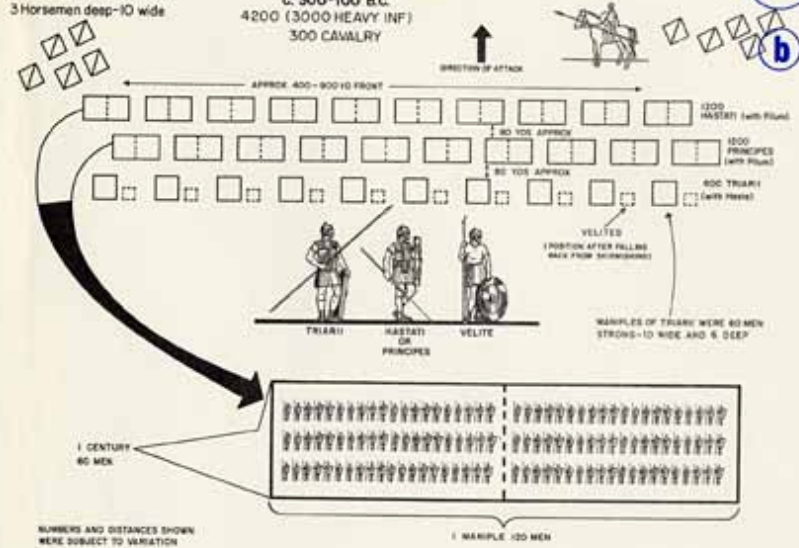


a

## Manipular Legion

Cavalry Turmae (Squadron)  
3 Horsemen deep-10 wide

C. 300-100 B.C.  
4200 (3000 HEAVY INF)  
300 CAVALRY

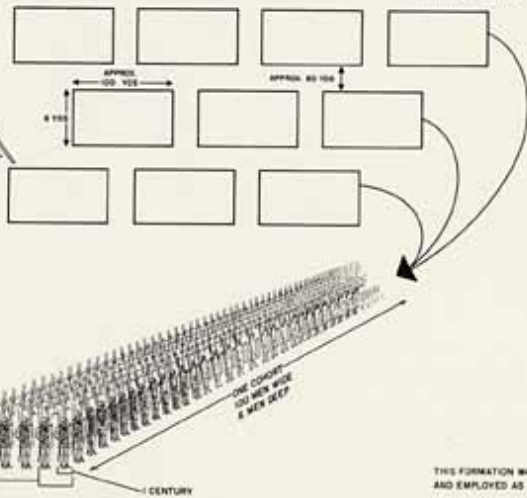


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b

## Cohortal Legion

C. 100 B.C.- THRU IMPERIAL ROME  
6000 HEAVY INFANTRY  
NO CAVALRY OR LIGHT TROOPS



c

## Legionnaire

### Centurion



## Eagle Bearer

### Velite



d



# Key Roles



- The **centurions** were very important men
- They were responsible for training the soldiers under their command and making sure everyone **obeyed** orders.
- Failure to perform duties or cowardice were corrected by stoning or even execution of 1 every 10 men



# Standard Bearers

- Legion standard, silver eagle was considered sacred and was always kept near the commanding general
- Each century had its own emblem or standard.
- This was carried by the standard bearer, a very experienced and trusted soldier
- To lose your standard was a great disgrace





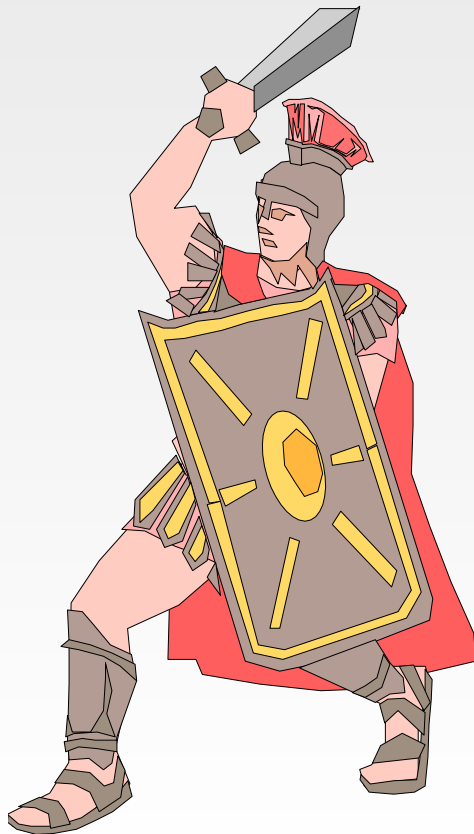
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"WE'RE HAVING SOME PROBLEMS WITH YOUR SHIELD  
DESIGN..."



# How to become a Legionary!

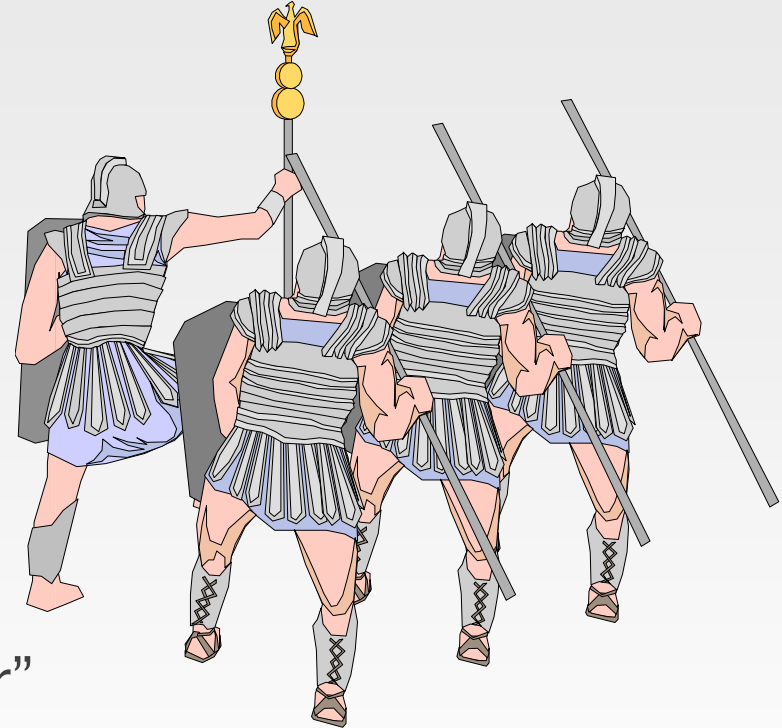


- You had to be a Roman citizen
- You had to be physically fit and 1.6m tall
- You were expected to stay in the army for 25 years



# Training

- Most soldiers joined between 18-20 years old
- There were three 30km marches each month
- On each march the legionary would carry 25 kilos of equipment
- Motto: “Strength and Honour”
- The 3 D's: DRILL, DISCIPLINE and DECIMATION.

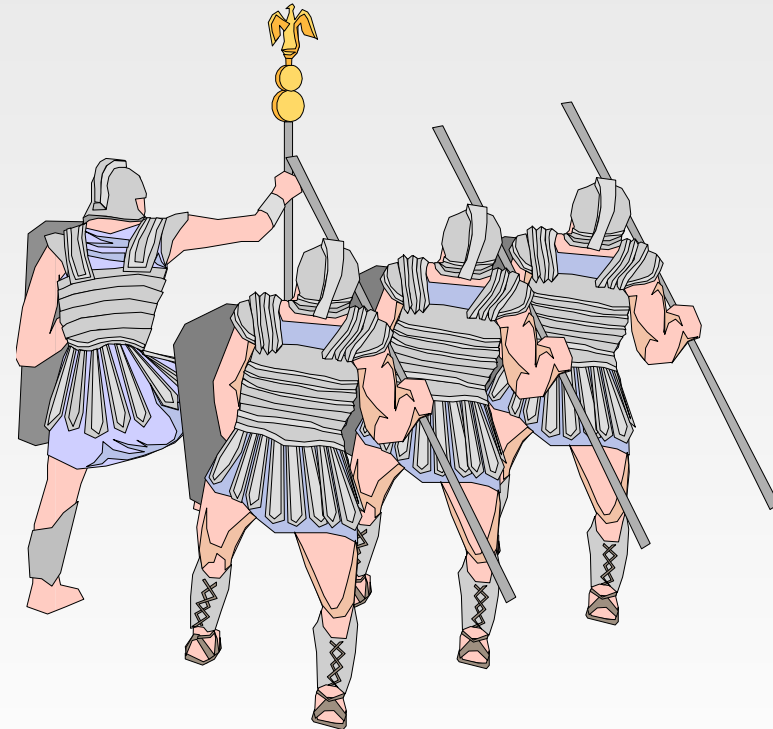






# Training

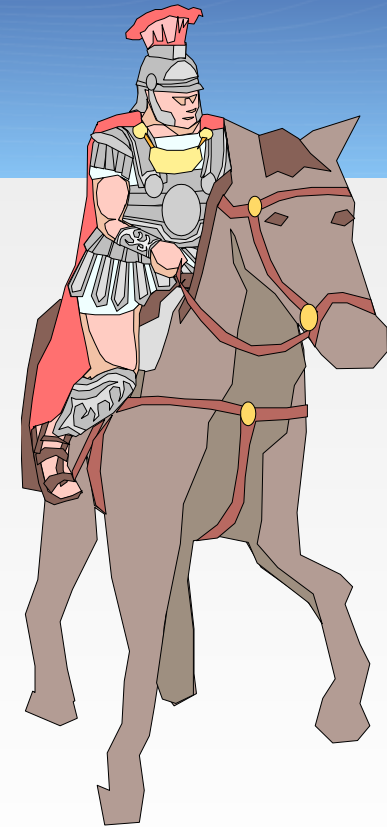
- Legionaries would also learn drill, or marching
- This was important for learning manoeuvres in battle
- New recruits were given shields and swords twice as heavy as the real thing!
- Policy of “divide and conquer”
- To move armies around so quickly, Romans built roads and bridges
- Built war machines (catapult which could hurl a 27 kg boulder 500m and battering ram which took 1000 men to mobilize it for action)





# Who else was in the Army?

- **Auxiliaries**- These were soldiers from lands conquered by the Romans who volunteered to fight for the Romans
- many of these had special skills- like **cavalry** soldiers
- Archers
- Most fought with a sword and short spear
- Thought of by Romans as second class soldiers , paid less and not trained as rigorously
- After 25 years- they became **Citizens** (and their children too!)



## Task: Match the statements up.

<b>Legion</b>	<b>Commanded a Legion</b>
<b>Legate</b>	<b>Commanded a Century</b>
<b>Cohort</b>	<b>Made up of 10 cohorts</b>
<b>Century</b>	<b>Made up of 6 centuries</b>
<b>Centurion</b>	<b>Soldier in a Roman legion</b>
<b>Auxiliaries</b>	<b>Non-Roman volunteers</b>
<b>Legionary</b>	<b>About 80 men</b>

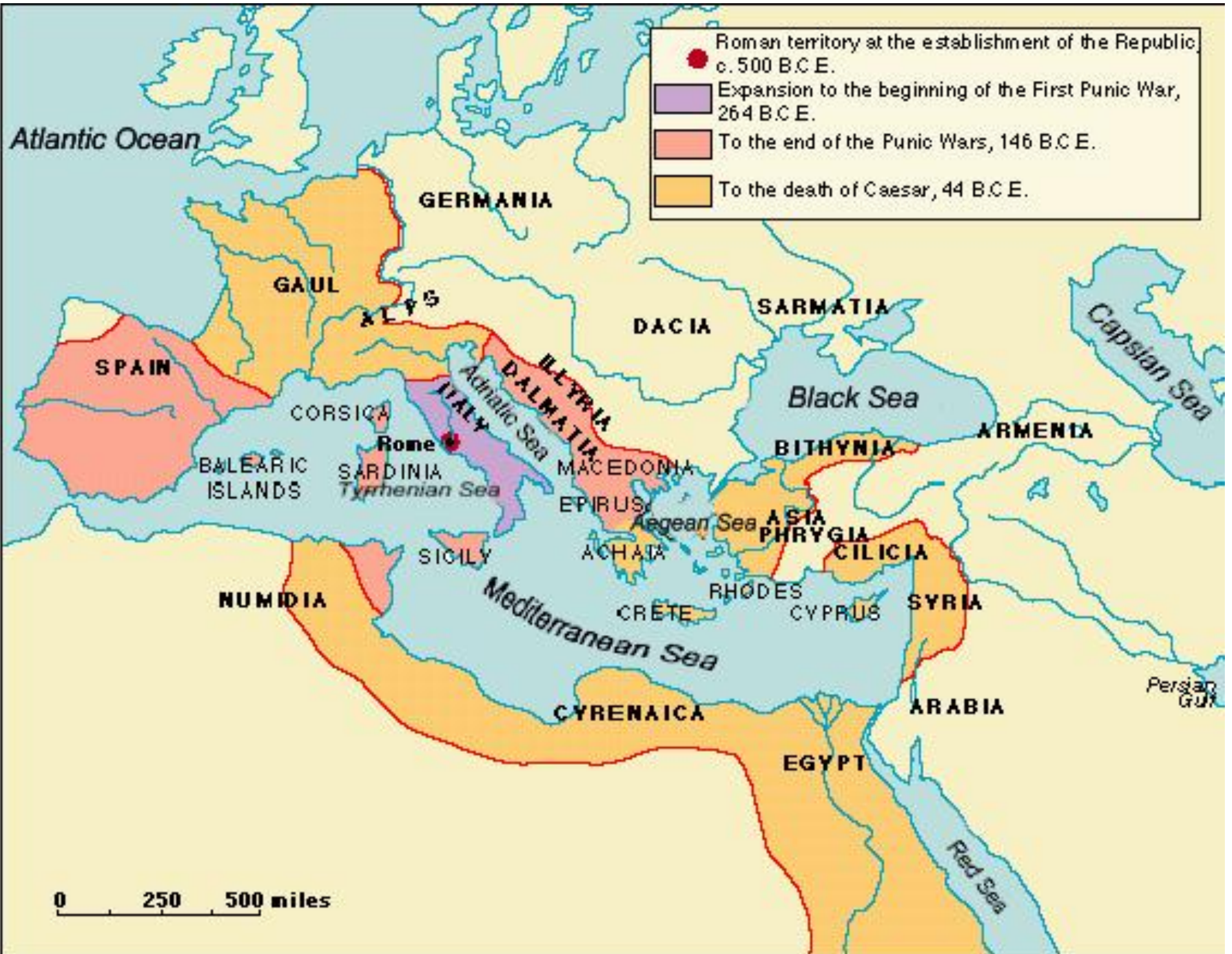
## Answers: Match the statements up.

Legion	Made up of 10 cohorts
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Century	About 80 men
Centurion	Commanded a Century
Auxiliaries	Non-Roman volunteers
Legionary	Soldier in a Roman legion



# Changes to Legions

- At the end of the 2nd century BCE (c. 107 BCE) **Gaius Marius** reformed the legions as a professional force drawing from the poorest classes, enabling Rome to field larger armies and **providing employment for jobless citizens** of the city of Rome.
- Immediately after the Marian reforms, a Roman legion comprised ten cohorts, known simply as "The first cohort", "The second cohort" etc. The first cohort was considered to be the most senior and prestigious, and the tenth the least.
- However, **this new system started to foster a loyalty of the soldiers in the hands of their general rather than the State of Rome itself.** This development ultimately enabled **Julius Caesar** to cross the **Rubicon** with an army loyal to him personally and effectively end the Republic.





## Why was the Roman Army so successful?

- How was the army organised? Why would this be effective?
- How were soldiers trained?
- What problems started to emerge with the loyalty of the Roman legions with new reforms? Why would this be problematic for the Roman Republic?



## Task 2: Fling the Teacher

- <http://www.arnewood.net/studentzone/subjects/history/history/flingtheteacher/romanarmy.html>





## Resource

- <http://www.arnewood.net/studentzone/subjects/history/history/year7/romanarmy.htm> |