

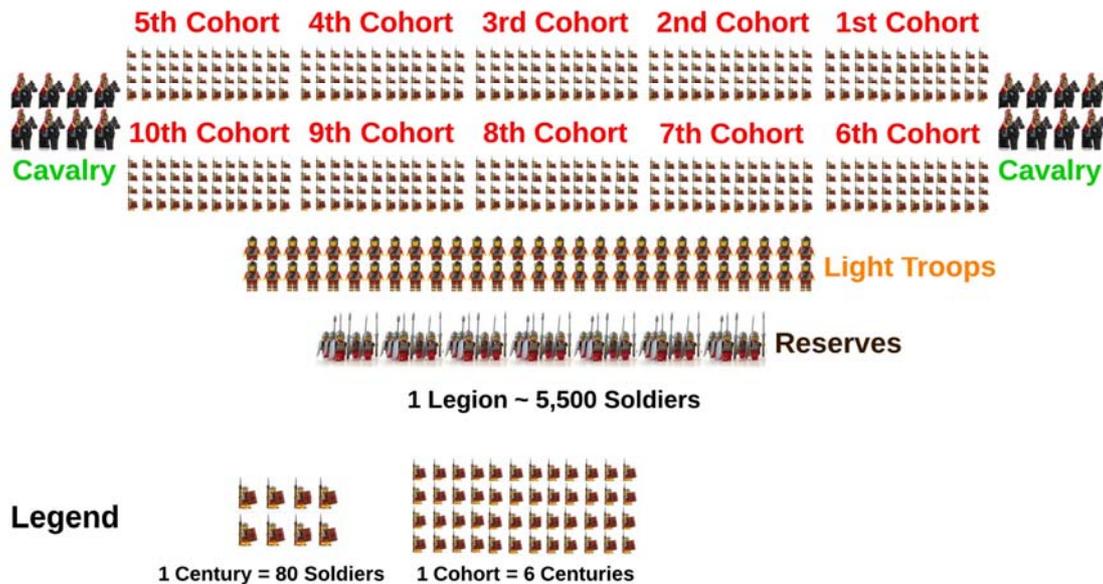
# Roman 2: The Roman Military



## Roman Legion

The Roman republican army had evolved under reforms by [Scipio Africanus](#), [Marius](#) and [Julius Caesar](#) and under the first emperor, [Augustus](#), a standing Roman Imperial army was created of 28 legions of roughly 6000 men each. The Roman army could also call upon large numbers of auxiliary troops.

### The Roman Legion



A typical legion consisted of around 6000 men, made up of 10 *cohorts*, each of which was divided into six *centuries* of 80 *legionaries*, commanded by a *centurion*. Each legion also had 120 horsemen assigned to it, primarily as scouts and dispatch riders. The legion commander was known as a *legate*.

A legionary served in the army for 20 years (plus 5 years of lighter duties), at which point they would receive a pension and a plot of land in a conquered province. Many retired soldiers settled in military towns known as *colonia*.





Typical Roman legionary of the first century AD. A tunic was worn under the armour. The armour was flexible for increased mobility and the large curved shield provided body protection. A legionary would first throw the javelins before drawing their sword and engaging the enemy.

Legionary hand weapons:

*Pugio* (dagger)

*Gladius* (sword)

*Pilum* (javelin)



Roman auxiliary troops were recruited from non-citizens either inside or outside the empire. They could be armed with spears, bows or slings or be mounted on horses.



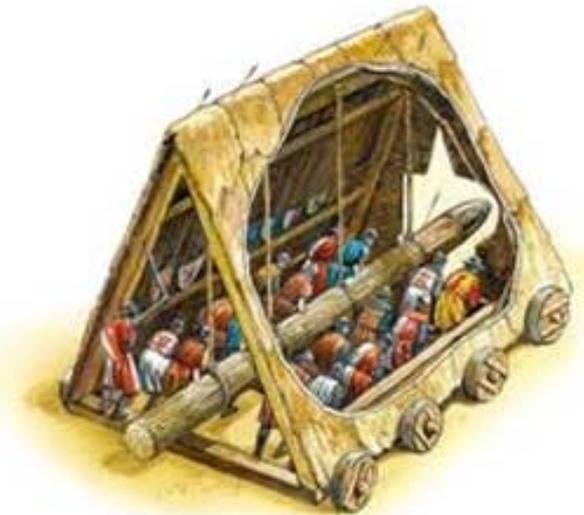
The Roman Army could call upon various pieces of artillery to soften up an army or defended town.

Onager—A stone throwing catapult powered using torsional force, generally from a twisted rope.



Ballista—A stone throwing machine more like a crossbow than a catapult.

Battering Ram— Large beam suspended from a frame with a metal 'ram' on end to punch a hole in city walls or gates



Scorpio—A torsion powered form of crossbow, firing a metal bolt at great force.



## Further Study

Key examples to enhance study of the Roman military machine in Britain



### Hadrian's Wall

World Heritage Site, Roman frontier running 73 miles coast to coast.

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/hadrians-wall>

### Caerleon Roman Fortress

Known as *Isca* to the Romans, ruins include fortress barracks, baths and amphitheatre.

<https://museum.wales/roman/ruins/>



### Vindolanda Roman Fort

Roman Auxiliary Fort, famous for *The Vindolanda Tablets*.

<http://www.vindolanda.com/>

The [Vindolanda Tablets](http://vindolanda.csad.ox.ac.uk/) are the oldest surviving handwritten documents in Britain. View them online at:

<http://vindolanda.csad.ox.ac.uk/>

