

THE ROMAN ARMY

Without the mighty Roman army, the empire could never have been created at all. Well-trained and highly disciplined, this formidable fighting force was one of the most feared and successful armies in history.

For hundreds of years, it seemed unbeatable.

Here you can see men dressed as Roman soldiers. The man in the plumed helmet is a centurion - an officer who led a century (a group of 80 men).

THE EARLY ARMY

In the early Republic, Rome didn't have a professional army. Only Roman citizens who owned land were allowed to fight for Rome, and very few of these were full-time soldiers. When a war started, thousands of men were called up, but they had to provide their own weapons and equipment, and they mostly returned home as soon as the fighting was over, to get on with their lives back in Rome.

Each century had a decorated staff, called a standard.

TURNING PROFESSIONAL

As the Romans began to fight wars overseas and expand their territory, they needed a bigger and better army to conquer faraway lands and control distant provinces. In the 2nd century BC, the army was completely transformed by a commander named Gaius Marius, who turned it into a full-time, professional fighting force.

INTERNET LINK

For links to websites where you can watch videos of soldiers training for battle and command a Roman legion of your own, go to www.usborne-quicklinks.com

