

# THE ORGANIZATION OF THE ARMY

The structure of the Roman army changed a lot over the centuries. These two pages explain how the army was organized in the early days of the Republic, and later under the Empire. You can also find out about different types of soldiers and battle formations.

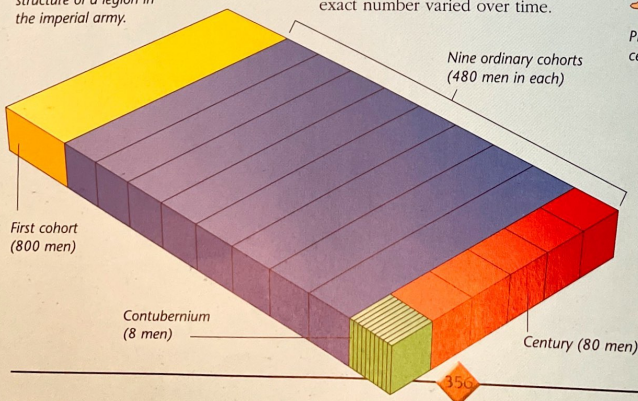
## THE REPUBLICAN ARMY

At the start of the Republic, the army was organized very simply, and soldiers were divided into groups called centuries, each containing 100 men. Later, as the army grew, soldiers were grouped into much larger units, called legions, of about 4,200 men. Each legion was divided into groups known as maniples, containing 120 men.

## THE IMPERIAL ARMY

During the Empire, the army reached the peak of its organization. It was successful because each legion was divided into lots of small, highly disciplined groups.

This diagram shows the structure of a legion in the imperial army.



### CONTUBERNIUM (8 MEN)

A group of eight soldiers was known as a *contubernium*. The members of each *contubernium* shared a tent together when the army was on the move, and shared a pair of rooms in the army fort.

### CENTURY (80 MEN)

Ten *contubernia* (80 men) made up a century, which was smaller than in Republican times when it had got its name from having 100 men. This new, smaller century was easier to control and more effective in battle. Each century was commanded by a centurion.

### COHORT (480 MEN)

A cohort was usually made up of six centuries (480 men), but the first cohort in every legion had ten centuries (800 men). Some of these extra men were cooks and clerks, who didn't usually fight.

### LEGION (6,000 MEN)

A legion was made up of ten cohorts, nine of the usual size and one of 800 men, making over 5,000 soldiers in all. Each legion also included more than a hundred horseback messengers, as well as builders, engineers, doctors and a catapult maker. The Roman army had a total of 25 to 35 legions - the exact number varied over time.

## TYPES OF SOLDIERS

By the time of the Empire, there were many different types of soldiers in the army. Here are some of the most common ones:



*Legate - An experienced officer who commanded a legion.*



*Tribune - An officer who helped the legatus to run the legion. Each legion had six tribunes.*



*Praefectus Castrorum - A senior officer in charge of the training and organization of a legion.*

*Primus Pilus - The senior centurion in a legion.*



*Centurion - The leader of a century.*

