

# JOIN THE ARMY!

If you wanted to join the Roman army you would have to be a male Roman citizen at least 18 years old and 1.7 metres tall, healthy and of good character. It would help if you could get someone important to write explaining what a fine person you were.

You would be sent for an interview and given a medical. If you were accepted, you signed up for twenty-five years. You would be posted to a legion and asked to take an oath of loyalty to the Emperor of Rome.



**I PROMISE...**  
Soldiers raised one hand when they took the oath of loyalty.

## ARMY PAY

**WHY JOIN?**  
In the army a recruit learned skills and was well fed. Not only did he earn money, he travelled with the legion to far-off lands and could comfortably retire after his service.



**Denarii coins**



**1 denarius bought 25 oysters**



**25 denarii = one shirt**

**PAY DAYS**  
A legionary's basic pay was about 300 denarii (silver pieces) per year. Some pay was held back for food and equipment, pension and funeral savings. The balance was paid out roughly every three months.

## WHERE THE MONEY WENT



**Pension**



**Spending**



**Funeral club**



**Food and equipment**

**SPENDING**  
Legionaries' pay did not go far. In about AD100 a new shirt cost about a month's pay.

## IN TRAINING

New recruits went through a thorough training, not just in fighting but also in skills such as roadbuilding, carpentry and even swimming.

The troops went on regular manoeuvres, including cross-country marches and overnight camping trips.

## ON PARADE

Every morning (twice a day for new recruits) legionaries would go to the parade ground to practise marching patterns, battle formations and responding to commands.

## KILL!

Recruits learned to fight by attacking wooden posts with wooden swords, javelins and wicker shields while a centurion shouted instructions at them.



A centurion watches troops in training

*'Make sure your army commander notices your short hair, hairy nostrils and broad shoulders... That way you might become a centurion by the time you're sixty.'*

Juvenal, Roman poet