



JOINING UP



If this book belongs to someone else and you're reading it to see whether army life is for you, check the list of requirements below.

You must:

I. BE AT LEAST 1.75M (5'8") TALL

You'll be measured in bare feet, so don't think you can bring trick shoes.



II. BE SLIM BUT MUSCULAR – being super-fit helps. Don't worry if you're not fit at the start of basic training. You will be by the end.

III. HAVE EXCELLENT VISION...



...AND HEARING



IV. BE ABLE TO READ AND WRITE

If you're holding this, you can probably read, but how good's your lettering? Army life's not all sword-slashing, you know – there's some pen-pushing too.



V. BE A ROMAN CITIZEN

You'll need proof – and a home-made toga from an old bedsheet isn't enough.



DO YOU MAKE THE GRADE?



Think you'll satisfy the entrance board? Then there's only an interview and medical to pass before you're in. But there are other qualities not mentioned on recruitment posters that could prove useful – see the quiz overleaf.



CHAPTER II

LIFE OF A RAW RECRUIT



You'll soon know most people around camp, at least by sight. But you'll get to know the seven soldiers in your contubernium better than brothers. The most experienced one of you will be boss and, just so you don't forget, your contubernium will take his name.



BASIC TRAINING

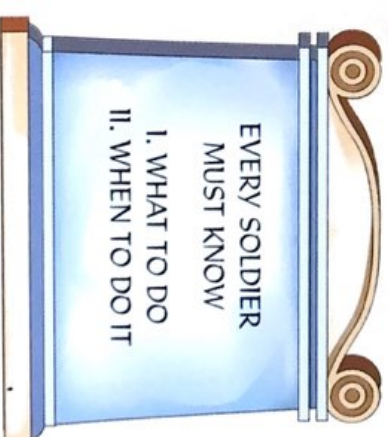


Basic Training: for the first four months, you'll eat, sleep and breathe nothing else. New recruits are out twice a day – in wind, rain, hail or fog – perfecting battle drills, handling weapons and getting fit.

Just singin' and marchin' in the rain...



The eventual aim is for you all to react as one almost before the centurion barks his order. Remember: the army fights as a single unit.



ALL TOGETHER NOW!



Acting in unison is probably one of the hardest things you'll have to master. But don't worry. An ingenious exercise has been devised which combines working as one with keeping fit: the ROUTE MARCH.



On a normal route march, you'll cover 20 Roman miles (that's almost 30 kms and just over 18 miles) in five hours. But if your centurion is having a bad day – and he usually is – he could make you march 24 Roman miles (35.5 kms; 22 miles) in the same time.

You'll be sent on a route march about once every ten days. Singing rhythmic songs with fellow marchers can help you keep in step. (They're too rude to print here but you'll pick them up quickly enough.)

WHOLE KIT & KABOODLE

What makes a route march so bad is that you carry everything you'd take if you were moving camp. In fact, you often march

somewhere, set up camp and take it straight down again.

This isn't because your centurion can't make up his mind but so you get used to putting up tents in a flash. (See pages 56-58.)



IN THE BAG

The combination of pack plus weapons can weigh over 30kgs (70lbs). Imagine carrying a large dog on your back for five miles. As we say in the army: weight training? Who needs it?



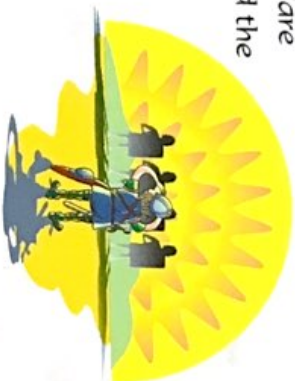


BATTLE TRICKS



I. KEEP THE SUN AT YOUR BACK

Any glare
will blind the
enemy.



II. CHECK THE WIND DIRECTION



If it's blowing away from you, dust will fly into the enemy's faces, causing coughing, confusion and chaos. Missiles go further too.

III. GRAB A HEIGHT ADVANTAGE



If there's a hill,
make sure you're
on top.



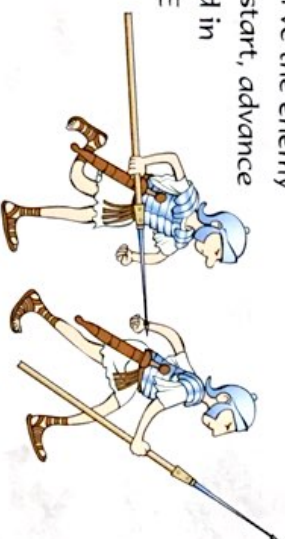
BATTLE TACTICS



For use as the fight begins:

I. THROW THEM BEFORE THEY THROW YOU

To unnerv the enemy
from the start, advance
slowly and in
ABSOLUTE
SILENCE.



When your massed ranks are about 15m (50ft) away, hurl your pila* and charge forward with swords drawn, screaming a battle cry as you go.



II. STICK TOGETHER

Give the enemy no chance to break through your ranks and, if they don't run from your terrifying charge, try hand-to-hand combat.

* plural of pilum