

Why and how the Romans successfully invaded Britain



In the year 55 BC, **Julius Caesar** was emperor of Rome. The Romans wanted to expand their empire and gain more lands for themselves. Julius Caesar and the Roman army had conquered France not long before. The Britons (the people of Britain) had helped France to fight against the Romans. Caesar decided to try and conquer Britain too. He invaded Britain twice but both times was forced to retreat.

It wasn't until the year 43 AD (nearly a hundred years after Caesar's first attempt) that the Romans managed to conquer Britain. By this time, **Claudius** was emperor and he was keen to show everyone how strong and powerful he was. He took an army of 40,000 men to invade Britain and this time was successful.



One of the reasons that the Romans were able to conquer lots of different lands like Britain was because their army was so **large, strong** and **well-organised**. There were two main types of soldiers:

LEGIONARIES

These were Roman citizens over 17 years of age. They had to be extremely fit to join - anyone considered too weak or too short was rejected.

AUXILIARIES

These were non-Roman citizens from countries that the Romans had conquered. They were only paid one third of the wage of a legionary soldier.



There were strict punishments for any soldier who didn't follow orders. If you fell asleep on duty, you could be sentenced to death!

The Roman army was made up of **legions** which had around 5000 men. Legions were organised in a very specific way:

Eight men were put into a group called a **tent**.

Ten tents were put together to form a **century** of 80 men.

Six centuries were put together to form a **cohort** of 480 men.

Ten cohorts were put together to form a **legion**.