



Legionary: The Roman Soldier's (Unofficial) Manual

Philip Matyszak

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Your emperor needs you for the Roman army! The year is AD 100 and Rome stands supreme and unconquerable from the desert sands of Mesopotamia to the misty highlands of Caledonia. Yet the might of Rome rests completely on the armored shoulders of the legionaries who hold back the barbarian hordes and push forward the frontiers of empire.

This carefully researched yet entertainingly nonacademic book tells you how to join the Roman legions, the best places to serve, and how to keep your armor from getting rusty. Learn to march under the eagles of Rome, from training, campaigns, and battle to the glory of a Roman Triumph and retirement with a pension plan. Every aspect of army life is discussed, from drill to diet, with handy tips on topics such as how to select the best boots or how to avoid being skewered by enemy spears. Combining the latest archaeological discoveries with the written records of those who actually saw the Roman legions in action, this book provides a vivid picture of what it meant to be a Roman legionary.

Legionary: The Roman Soldier's (Unofficial) Manual Details

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Author : Philip Matyszak

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Thiago d'Evecque says

Escrito no estilo de um manual mesmo, para quem deseja se alistar nas legiões romanas e conhecer o trabalho dos soldados sob o império de Trajano, no auge de Roma. O autor explica a diferença entre os postos, como centuriões e auxiliares, a importância das botas, o dia a dia dos legionários, treinamento, disciplina, equipamento, combate. Não é muito profundo, mas achei bom o bastante para torná-lo uma pesquisa divertida e fluida.

Rich McGilvray says

A fun little book filled with great information, I enjoyed reading it!

Patrick Walker says

A very fun book. Not the most "in depth" look into the legions, but that doesn't seem to be the point. The author has a good sense of humor and the book is engaging.

Pat Mizell says

A friend discovered this and couldn't wait to call and tell me. I looked up the author and said "big gun"; and read on. So I ended up ordering and reading three of Dr. Matyszak's books, and will go back for the others.

It's rare to find a top rate scholar who can look at history with a grin on his face; I think the good Doc does. I do know that it was funny as hell. I know I learned a lot...and that brings up a good point. I don't think you have to be scholarly and grim to write and teach people. In fact I'd make a bet. I'd bet that reading this book would teach a newbie let me correct that....the newbie would know more and remember more from this book than he would from a normal textbook on the same subject.

The humor in it cracked me up; the narrator sounded like the Marine Corps recruiter AFTER you had signed on the dotted line. Here it comes bud!

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Sarah says

Ha Ha - hilarious. Definitely recommend this for any military history buffs.

Adam says

This is a very great read for those interested in military history, especially more about the life of a soldier and the things outside of the battle parts of military history. Here are the chapters:

1. Joining the Roman Army
2. The Prospective Recruit's Good Legion Guide
3. Alternative Military Careers
4. Legionary Kit and Equipment
5. Training, Discipline and Ranks
6. People Who Will Want to Kill You
7. Life in Camp
8. On Campaign
9. How to Storm a City
10. Battle
11. Aftermath

As this book is very short (around 200 pages and some pictures and diagrams) I was able to read this in a 2 hour period on a weekend outside of the local library, though I did skim through some of the chapters that didn't interest me. I would seriously consider for anybody that wants to know more about life in the Roman

Military to borrow this book from the library, and if really interested in this kinda stuff, maybe buy it online or from your local bookstore.

Ryan Patrick says

Antonio Ceté says

Tres estrellitas porque no voy a ser legionario. Si fuera a serlo, cinco estrellitas. Mucha información útil si vas a ser legionario. Altamente recomendado.

Lauren says

It was a great book to read with a dash of humor but still full of information.

James says

This was one of the more entertaining reads regarding the Roman military I've come across. It's billed as a sort of a "New Recruit's Guide to the Legions" and the author manages to weave humor into rich historical detail regarding the myriad facets of the Imperial Army during Trajan's reign. I recommend it to anyone new to the study of the Roman Army or even the Roman Empire itself. It's worth the day or so it'll take to read. Will likely read again in the future - especially when I start getting my kit together for reenactments!

Brian Turner says

Written in the style of a manual for the would-be legionary in 100 AD, this book manages to both educate and entertain in equal measure.

Starts with requirements for joining up, looks at different parts of the army, explains where legions are based (and what can be expected there), then goes into everything from boot-camp up to taking part in a siege and the triumphal return (if you've managed to stay alive).

A lot is made of what the legionary has to help kill/pacify Rome's enemies, as well as what they will be using to try and pacify you.

Each chapter starts with a pithy military style saying in Latin (with translation), and there are several colour plates through the book as well as good line drawn illustrations.

The author is a historian, and has done an excellent job of writing a well researched book, which comes

across as a veteran taking a green recruit to one side and filling him in on the things the recruiting officer may have neglected to mention.

Terence says

[image error]

Erik Graff says

I almost didn't buy this book upon perusing it at the Hayward Public Library in Wisconsin. The price was right, the book externally attractive with high quality paper. At a dollar, in pristine condition, it was quite a deal--and I've been interested in Roman history since childhood. What disquieted me was the internal setup of the thing. This is no straight, albeit illustrated, text punctuated by colored plates. No, at first glance it appeared like something written for children: suspiciously many illustrations, short chapters, shorter subsections and subsections to the subsections, lots of fonts, lots of italicized quotations set off from the text, lots of lists, side remarks set off in boxes--for children or for persons with very short attention spans. Still, at a dollar, what could I be risking? I could always pass it on.

As it happens, while written at an introductory level and while appropriate for reading in short snatches of time, Matyszak's book isn't bad. What he does is review the careers of archetypal soldiers, sailors and auxiliaries from enlistment to retirement under the reign of Trajan, when the empire was at its height. While doing this he gives the general background of Roman military organization, technology and tactics, with some history of how things came to be as they were in 100 CE. As a whole, the book provides somewhat of a concrete sense of the soldier's life back in those days and, in so doing, something of a sense of what life in the empire was like.

Matyszak tries to be funny. He tries hard. His jokes and asides, while pretty obvious and predictable, reminded me of some high school teachers, ones who were trying to reach out to us kids. I appreciated their efforts then and I can see how the author's efforts to reach out with humor set within what approximates a two-dimensional representation of the hyperdimensional internet might work together to make this a good gift for a youngster.

Terry says

Fascinating and enlightening.
