

## Roman Legion

The invasion and eventual settling of Londinium by the Roman Empire would not have been possible if it weren't for the amazing and unbeatable legion army that it had created. Based off the Greek phalanx formation, over time the Roman legion gained vast improvements and upgrades due to technology and military minds, which propelled it to be the most unbeatable force the world had ever seen.

In no way would a full scaled invasion of Britannia have been successful if it



wasn't for the superiority of the Roman Legion. Here we will discuss the formations and general assembly of the Roman Legion so that it can be understood how an army could be so successful with its tactics.

Roman Legions prepare for battle!

The army which would have invaded Britannia and secured Londinium, would have been the "Classic" Legion. This legion was coined under Augustus and

when we see Hollywood productions, or illustrations these are the most commonly depicted Roman soldiers. The “Classic” legion would be a success for



Caesar Augustus: The mastermind behind the classic legion.

the Romans till about 250 A.D. when drastic changes were made to the army. The Roman Legion consisted of twenty-eight legions, each staffing about six thousand soldiers. Each legion had a breakdown of troops to more specific duties, but here we will concentrate on the general order of a legion.

([www.vroma.org](http://www.vroma.org))

Each common soldier carried about sixty-six pounds of equipment, which ranged from rations, personal possessions, to necessary equipment for battle. Each legion was commanded by the “Legatus” which would be our modern day general. The legion itself contained ten cohorts, which was then broken down into six centuries of eighty men, which was then overseen by a Centurion. There were six members selected by the “Legatus” to be the political military tribunes in the army, and if the “Legatus” deemed them worthy, they would be given control of an entire part of the legion. Moreover a Roman Legion consisted of many

different types of soldiers. Archers, Cavalry, foot soldiers, heavy infantry were the main use of legion and took up five thousand two hundred and forty spots on the six thousand man roster of a legion. The smaller difference consisted of centurions, military tribunes, officers and specialty troops. The specialty troops of the legion were soldiers who were taken out of the context of normal duties. They consisted of veterinarians, priests, engineers who built structures and camps for the legion, hunters for food, armorers for battle gear, and surveyors who would go out at night and find a suitable place for the ever advancing legion to rest. Here we can see a detailed chart of the division of a Roman Legion, courtesy of ([www.roman-empire.net](http://www.roman-empire.net))

1 Contubernium	-	8 men
10 Contubernia	1 Century	80 men
2 centuries	1 maniple	160 men
6 centuries	1 cohort	480 men
10 cohorts + 120 horsemen	1 legion	5240 men
*1 Legion = 9 normal cohorts (9 x 480 Men) + 1 "First Cohort" of 5 centuries (but each century at the strength of a maniple, so 5 x 160 Men) + 120 Horsemen = 5240 Men		

This is the way of the Roman of A.D. 43 when the Roman forces overran Britannia, and established Londinium. The Roman Conquest was a directly made

Londinium a worldwide trade center and eventually one of the most influential cities in the history of the entire world “London,”

## Pre-Rome London

Not much is to be said of the influence of London before the Roman conquest. Reason being London had no significant place in history at that time,



Ancient swamp and marsh land which was London before the Roman occupation.

nor did it bear an essential need to any that had come across it. The Romans saw in Londinium, a river of endless possibilities and quickly set their sight on a piece of land by the Thames River.

Yet to understand how London became the significant and influential cultural center it was after the Roman occupation, it is necessary to understand London before the Roman invasion of Britannia. Although there is some evidence of a few pre-historic settlements, London was never a point of any significance. In fact the only positive aspect of the London area was the Thames River. Even that

was questionable, because the surrounding land which the river ran through was a mix of marsh and swamp land. ([www.britainexpress.com](http://www.britainexpress.com))



Giants of myth: Gog & MaGog

Despite numerous excavations and archeological finds, there is no evidence to suggest that there was ever a permanent city settlement in the area of London. There has been discoveries of scattered attempts at farming as well as burial grounds suggesting that there may have been numerous nomadic tribes that made their way through the area. An old myth states that Brutus of Troy founded London after he defeated the giants named Gog and MaGog, and then named the city “New Troy.” Yet no evidence of this has been found and the general opinion is that before the Romans occupied the London and Britannia territory there were no permanent settlements of any significance. ([www.britannia.com](http://www.britannia.com))

## Roman London

In A.D. 43 The isle of Britannia and Londinium would see the most amount of action it had ever seen in its history so far. A legion so vast had its eyes set on the area to be used as an arms depot to fuel its war machine. This legion was of



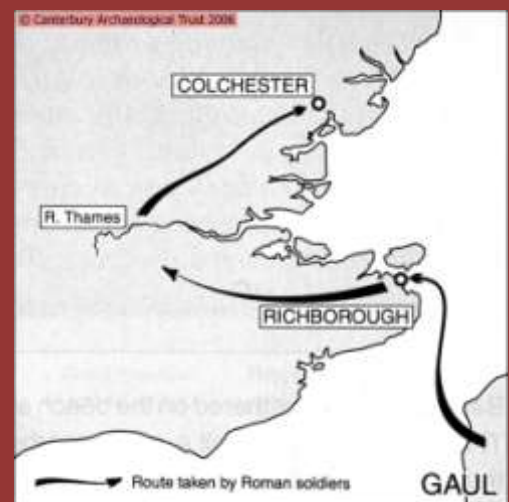
Roman art and style which had infiltrated to Londinium

course

the Romans. When Aulus Plautius was given the order to invade so called Britannia he took his Roman troops and let nothing stop him from victory.

Plautius took his troops through Kent and up to Colchester the most important town in Britannia then. After being constantly victorious his progress was halted by an object not even the Romans could defeat with blades and force.

The Thames River. After much deliberation it was decided that a wooden bridge would be built by the engineers in the legion, which would allow the Roman army to advance and further their conquest of Britannia. The bridge was built successfully and was only miles east of the now modern London



Roman Invasion route of Britannia

Bridge. ([www.britannia.com](http://www.britannia.com))

The inevitable growth of the newly coined Londinium city would now be inevitable due to the bridge. Although at first most of the people passing through were military, it was soon realized that the Thames area of Londinium was ideal for brick making, and also the deep still waters of the Thames within the tidal zone were ideal for berthing ships. Also the bridge made Londinium the focal



Roman Londinium

point of the Roman road structure throughout Britannia, thus attracting settlers, merchants, and other forms of life which consequently made the city explode into a focal point of trade and life within the Roman Empire.

It seemed that Londinium had gotten to popular for its own good. Before, the desolate land which had occupied the space of this now flourishing city was dismal and abhorred by the natives. But now because of the significance the Romans had placed on the city, it not only attracted the attention of settlers and merchants, but also the attention of Rome's enemies.



In A.D. 60 Londinium was burnt to the ground by the forces of Queen Boudicca, leader of the Iceni Tribe of Norfolk. She revolted against Roman rule and took advantage that the governor of Londinium Suetonius Paulinus was too busy exterminating the druids of North Wales. When he was notified of the attack



on Londinium he marched his troops south in an attempt to meet Boudicca's forces to save the city. Upon arrival he realized the enormity of her forces and decided to order an evacuation of the city rather than fight Queen Boudicca's army in a futile attempt which would waste his soldier's lives. ([www.britainexpress.com](http://www.britainexpress.com))

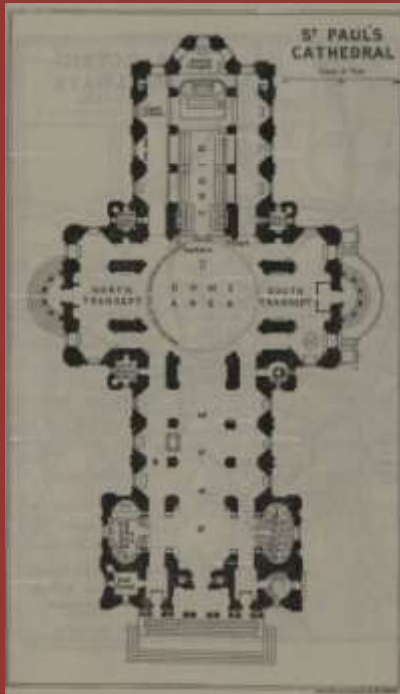
What proceeded after the evacuation was a complete and utter slaughtering of those who were unable to escape in the evacuation by Queen Boudicca's forces. Quickly after word spread of the attack, Rome retaliated. And Rome did what it did best; Queen Boudicca's forces were utterly annihilated the winter after they had taken the city. Consequently the Romans began to rebuild Londinium and it was eventually restored to the position it had been before the



ransacking of Queen Boudicca. Eventually it became even bigger and its growth was extremely rapid.

Eventually Londinium became an even more pivotal part of the Roman

Empire and was its mainstay for the parts of the empire that were west of the Alps. It contained the largest basilica, a governor's palace and numerous temples. Until the demise of the Roman Empire, Londinium was a pivotal and influential part of one of the greatest empires ever on earth. From a marshy bog land to superior Roman Architecture, either way you look at it, London was on the map now.



Ancient blueprints of St. Paul's Basilica

([www.roman-empire.net](http://www.roman-empire.net))

## After Rome: Anglo-Saxon London

In conjunction with the decline of the Roman Empire, London also saw a decline as well. The city soon became abandoned, just like the crumbling Roman Empire had abandoned Britannia. But in the seventh century around A.D. 604 the first St. Paul's cathedral was founded very close to where the present day

cathedral is today. London quickly became a trading giant again and with renewed vigor and life it attracted the attention of the Danes in the 9<sup>th</sup> century.

While under Danish control, Alfred the Great came and conquered the city in A.D. 886 and made London a part of his Kingdom of Wessex. Control of London went back and forth, after the death of Alfred London quickly fell back into the hands of the Danes until 1017 when King Cnut came to power and actually united



Alfred the Great

the Danes and the Anglo-Saxons. London prospered until his death, and then came under complete Anglo-Saxon control when Edward the Confessor who had been raised in Normandy brought French influence and trade with his rule over London. ([www.britannia.com](http://www.britannia.com))

In the following years London prospered as city yet it lacked one serious move up the importance ladder; it still was not the capital of Britain even though it was the biggest and most influential city. Competing with the then political capital of Britain Winchester, London confirmed its dominion over the British realm when Edward died in A.D. 1065. The heir to the throne: Harold was crowned in Westminster Abbey founded by the deeply religious Edward and thus

this assured London's dominance as the most important city in Britain, as well as becoming its capital. ([www.britainexpress.com](http://www.britainexpress.com))

In conclusion, London went from a boggy marshland of little significance to the booming capital and cultural center of the British Empire. With its beginnings in the Roman Empire, and its end nowhere in sight, we know this, ever since London was put on the map, it has and always will be an influential and pivotal part of world history.



St. Edward the Confessor

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